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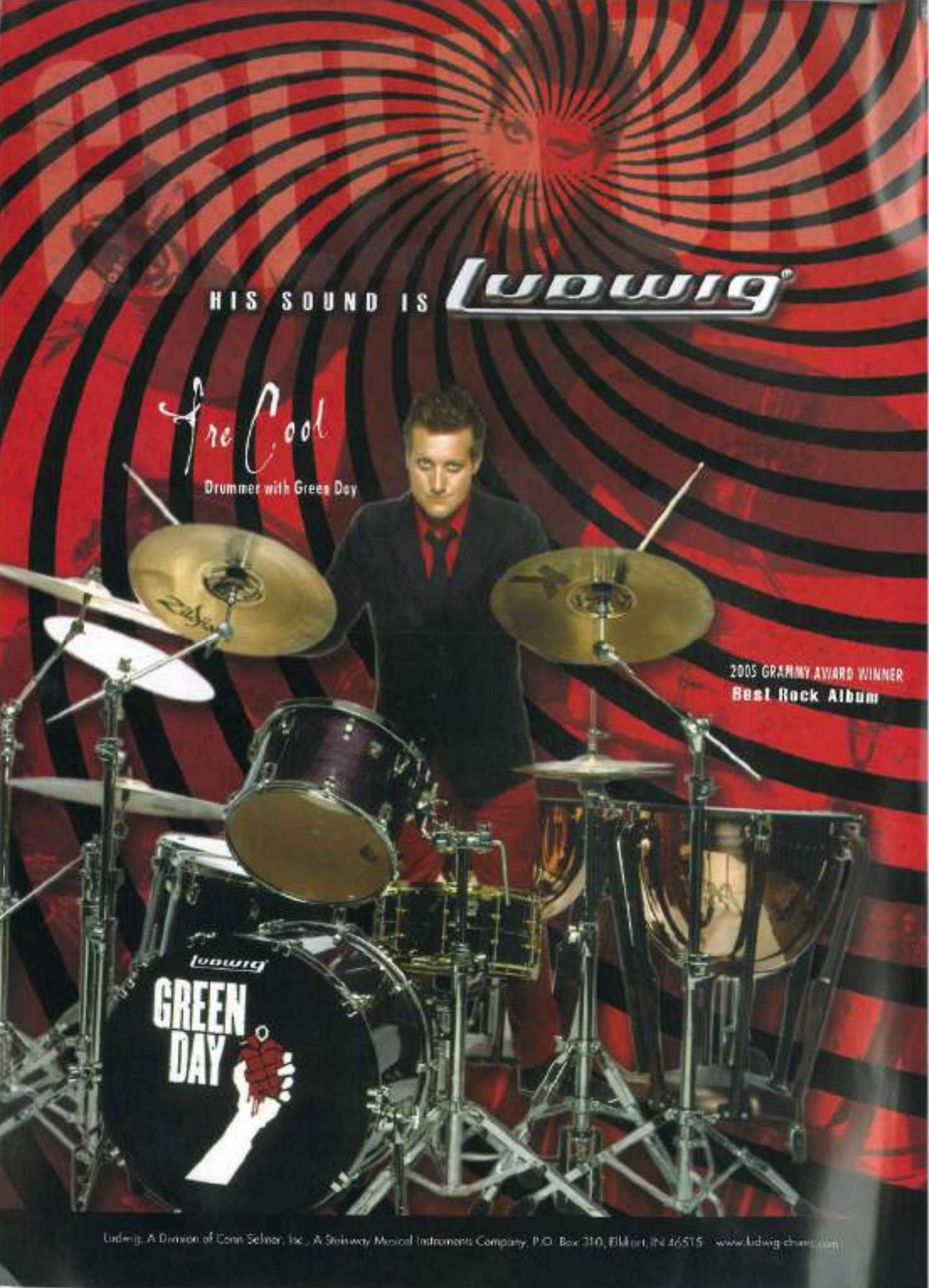

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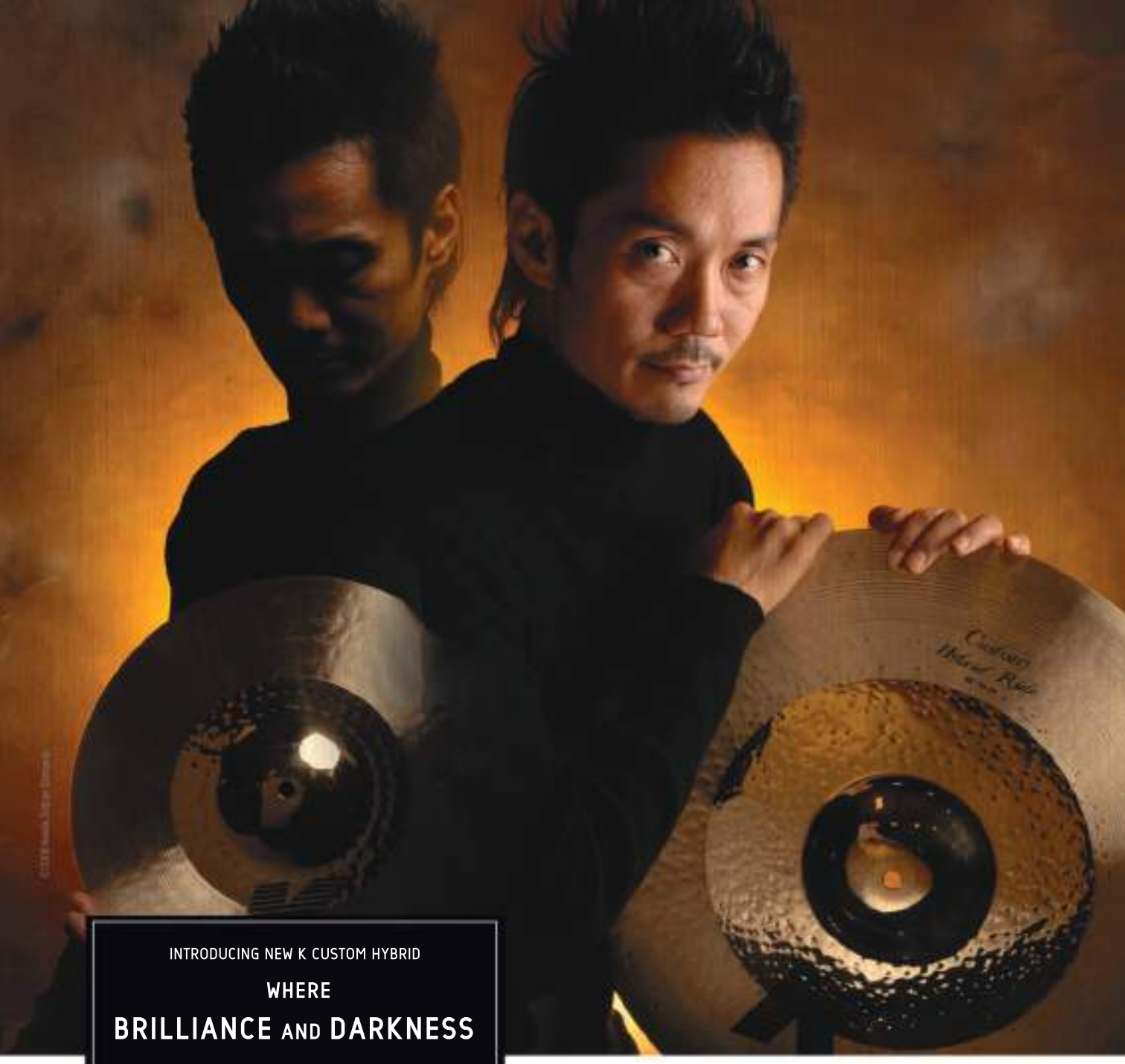

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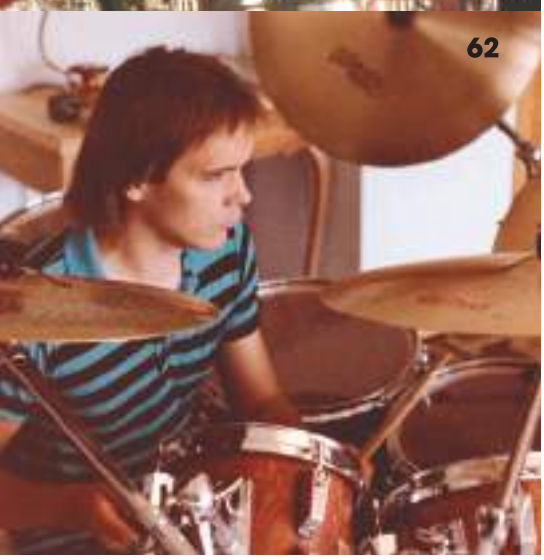

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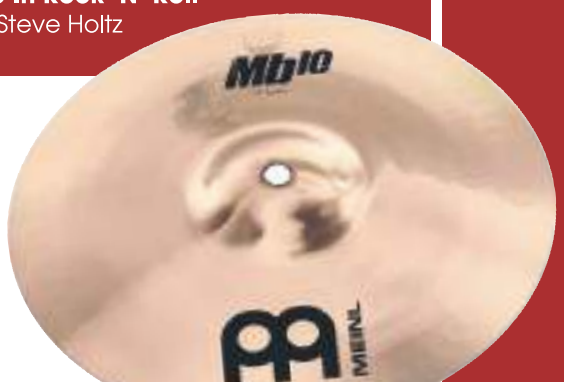

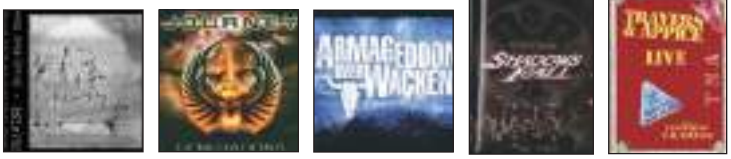

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Bein' A Star

"*So where does it start? Your being a star. Listening to all of the people say, You're gonna make it someday.*" Those lyrics, by the early-'70s band Barnaby Bye, are dear to me. Featuring multi-instrumentalists Peppy Castro and twins Billy and Bobby Alessi, as well as drummer Mike Riccardella, Barnaby Bye had a strong influence in my life when I was growing up. I can remember it like it was yesterday—learning and playing along to their two Atlantic Records releases, *Room To Grow* and *Touch*. To me, this band had it all—great songs, beautiful four-part harmonies, a cool look—and each player was a master on his instrument. Unfortunately, like so many great bands and musicians, they never became household names—though each did go on to become a successful solo artist.

After thirty years, Barnaby Bye recently got back together. Watching them perform again, after all these years, got me reminiscing and thinking about the many paths a musician takes in life. It made me think back to when I was young and hungry, and all I wanted when I grew up was to be a "rock star." In fact, I'm going through it all over again now with my seventeen-year-old son. All he wants to do is play music. All I hear is, "Don't worry, dad, I'll make it."

But what does "making it" really mean? Largely, it's a matter of degree. Do you really have to be a household name? Barnaby Bye's Mike Riccardella influenced me as much as any "big name" drummer—if not *more*—and now, thirty-some-odd years later, I finally was able to meet him and say, "Thanks for all the lessons you gave me without even knowing it."

Not only does Mike still play as fantastically as he did back in the day, he's one of the nicest, most humble people you'd ever want to meet. And he's a happy man, proud of what he's accomplished in his musical career—and very excited about his brand-new GMS drumkit. To me, *that's* making it.

So, I just wanted to take this opportunity to officially say thanks to Mike, Billy, Bobby, and Peppy for the inspiration and all the wonderful music. And to all the musicians out there who dream of "making it," don't ever give up. Keep playing, be happy, stay safe, and from the bottom of my heart, I wish you all the best.

"Life on the road is lonely and cold. The only thing that keeps you going strong is thinking tomorrow's your hit song."

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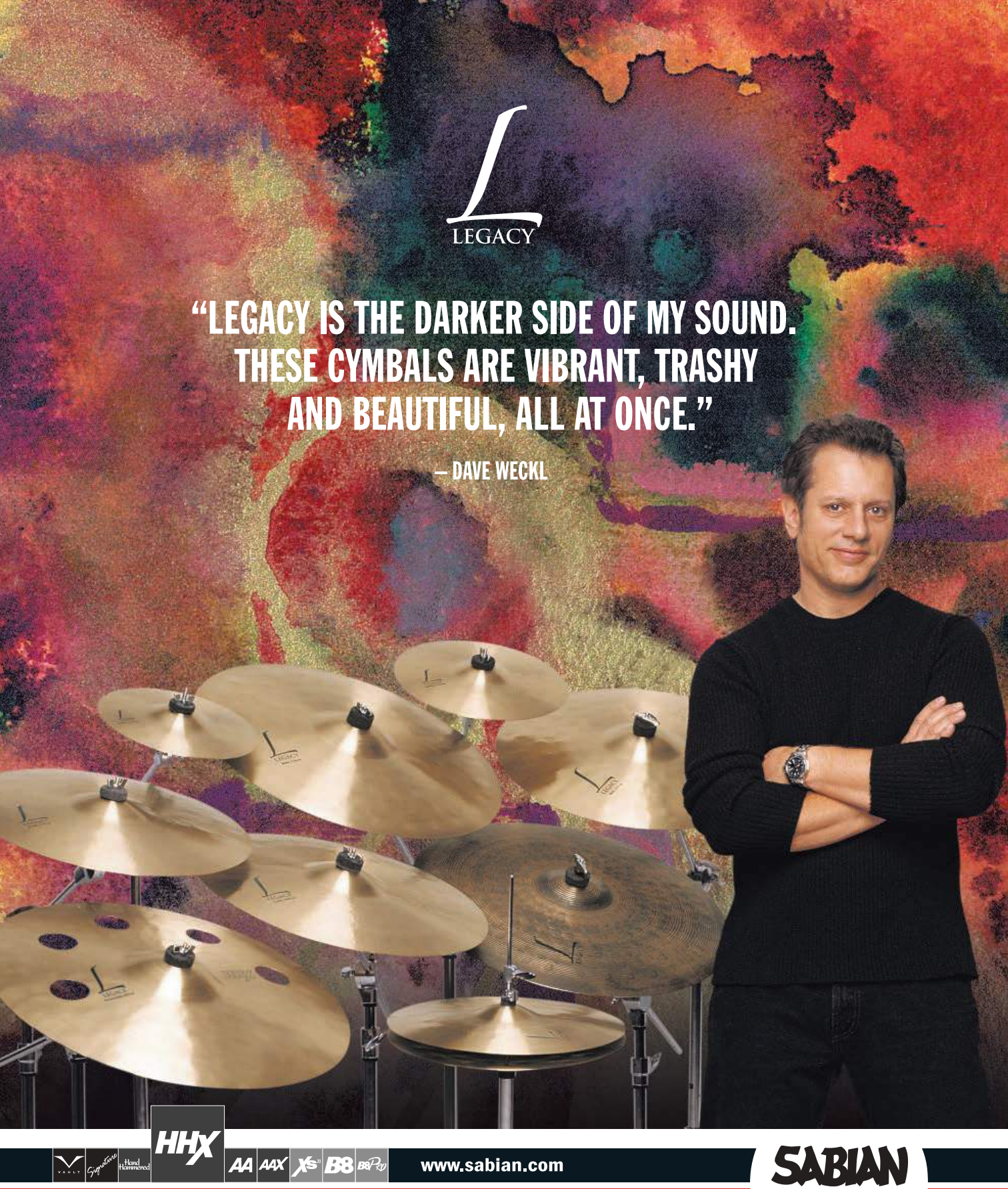

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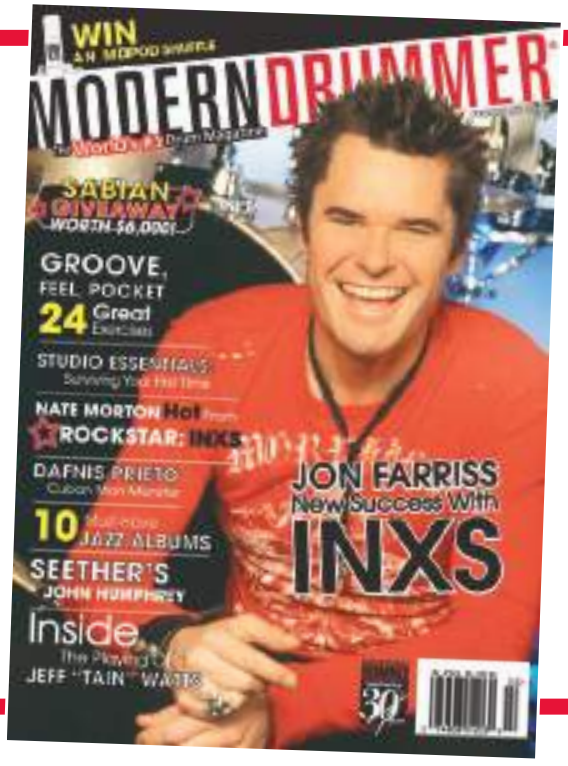

A Time To Help

Rick Van Horn's "A Time To Help" editorial in your February issue was great. I just returned from a five-day, seven-show benefit tour of the areas damaged by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. It was an experience I will never forget. Thank you for generating support for the musicians who need help.

Bob Boyd

Add Stan To The List

Thanks for publishing "The Heart And Soul Of Jazz—10 Must-Have Albums For Drummers" in your February issue. This informative article certainly identified some of the key recordings that feature fine jazz drumming.

I'd like to add the 1956 recording *This Time The Drums On Me* (Bethlehem 76683), by Stan Levey. It displays the talents of a man who deserves to be recognized as one of the all-time greats of jazz drumming.

Bob Owen

MD Pro And Con

First of all, thanks for giving me some great reading material to bring to work. I don't think I'd get though the forty hours per week without you folks.

My message here is part positive and part negative. On the positive side, I don't think I could have gotten more out of any DVD than I have from the 2005 MD Festival collection. I'm the most impressed with Zoro's performance and interview. He really brings to the forefront how important and intricate the "basics" are.

On the negative side, I can't understand Ken Micallef's review of the Cream *Albert Hall* reunion DVD in your February Critique department. While the group did seem to be a little cold and rigid in the first few numbers, I thought Ginger Baker was awesome, period. At the conclusion, I applauded the TV screen. 'Nuff said.

Paul David Petrillo

Ginger Baker deserves 5 drumset "stars," not the $2^1/_2$ Ken Micallef awarded in his review. Ask Eric Clapton and Jack Bruce if Ginger sounds tired, fumbles cues, drops beats, or missed an opportunity. I'd bet they'd say he plays and sounds better in so many ways.

It's Mr. Micallef who "missed an opportunity" to write an intelligent review on one of the most original drummers in rock and jazz. He missed the opportunity to write that Ginger has nothing to prove and can play as he likes. He missed the opportunity to write that Ginger plays vintage rock, jazz, and blues in the pocket with impeccable time. He missed the opportunity to remark that Ginger's sound has changed since 1968 with a new DW drumkit and 21st-century miking techniques. Finally, he missed the opportunity to review the music of Cream and how it sounds more mature.

Michael Welch

Merry Christmas From MD And Dennis

About one month before Christmas I emailed *MD* asking if you could forward a message from me to Dennis Chambers. I wanted to ask Dennis to sign a cymbal for my husband, Robbie, as a Christmas present. Within moments Dennis got back to me, and from there he went on to not only sign that cymbal, but also to include one of his signature stick bags as a gift for Robbie.

Being in the military, we've been far from home for the past three Christmases. Although we can't wait to get back to the States, thanks to you and Dennis I was able to give my husband the best present he's ever had for this holiday. Dennis is one of the nicest people we have ever had the chance to speak with, and I want to thank him—and *Modern Drummer*—for making my husband's dream come true.

Mari L. Graves

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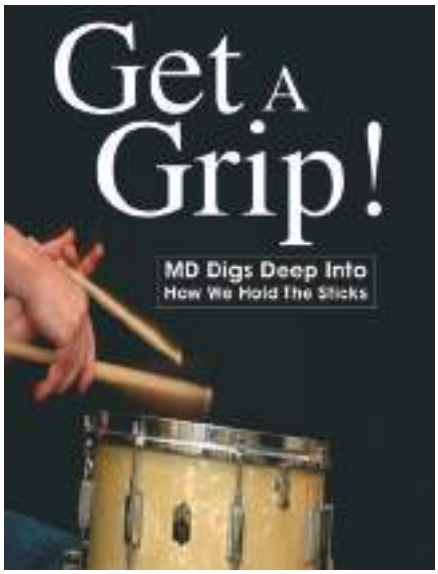
Readers' Platform

Get A Grip



I've never found the time to write to *MD* before. I must start by saying congratulations on thirty years of helping to grow and bring together the drumming community. I look forward to my next issue each month as much as when Ron Spagnardi sent me the very first one in 1977.

Since teaching is one of my passions, I felt compelled to comment on your "Get A Grip" feature in the January 2006 issue. T. Bruce Wittet did a great job of explaining both the uniqueness and the commonalities of grips. I came away with the idea that there isn't a right or wrong, but a lot of possibilities that should be explored to see what works and, most importantly, what naturally feels the best.

There was, however, one glaring truth in the article that I'm concerned might be overlooked by some readers. I'm speaking of Freddie Gruber's comment, "The grip is the housing for the stick. You're supporting a stick in motion. *You're* not doing anything; you're going for the ride." I studied with Freddie some thirty years ago, when he was teaching at a very intense level. There were *a lot* of exercises involved in breaking down what he is saying. I know that John Hernandez and other students of that era would agree with me that it takes months or years to try to understand those principles.

The great drummer and teacher Ed Shaughnessy told me that he once asked Buddy Rich to show him one thing that most drummers didn't know. Buddy picked up a stick, reached over to a snare drum, and played one single stroke. He let the stick bounce back *by itself*, and then stopped it. Ed commented, "So, what you're showing me is that it's a matter of allowing the natural rebound of the stick to do most of the work," and Buddy said, "Yeah."

I'm sure that Freddie's "You're going for the ride" and Buddy's "Yeah" are not a coincidence. It should not be overlooked that "The grip is the housing for the stick," and that it's as important to study the motion of the stick and how to motivate it as it is to study the grip. That combination could truly be a lifetime's study.

Don Lombardi
Founder, Drum Workshop, Inc.

Mark Craney

I was very sad to learn about Mark Craney's passing this past November 26. Mark was an important figure in the development of my drumming and my love for the instrument, especially after hearing his stellar playing on Jethro Tull's *A* and Gino Vannelli's *Brother To Brother* albums. I'm sure he left a similar mark on many other drummers all over the world, although he remained, for too many, an unsung hero.

Drum on, Mark. Your drumming will live forever.

Sergio Ponti
Italy

The inspiration that we get from seeing and hearing great players is a gift to be cherished. Mark Craney gave that gift to me, and he never even knew it. I remember seeing him locally as a young player with The Zero Ted Band, and he changed my life. I took his gift of inspiration, and I keep it today. So it was hard for me to hear of his health struggles over the years, and it was even harder to learn of his recent passing.

Thank you for your gift, Mark. Hopefully it can flow through me to some young listener, to be carried on.

Danny Wyant

Editors's note: MD*'s tribute to Mark begins on page 62 of this issue.*

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Do Holes Reduce Shell Resonance?

I have a 1980 Rogers XP-8 kit, with 8-ply maple shells. Several years ago I outfitted the toms with RIMS mounts. Since the original Memriloc tom brackets protruded into the shell, that left approximately 1"-diameter holes in the shells where the brackets used to be.

The drums sound significantly better with the RIMS mounts, but they don't quite "sing" like many of the current high-end kits on the market. Might those holes be having a negative impact on the resonance of the drums? Might they allow the air to escape too quickly and cut short the sustain?

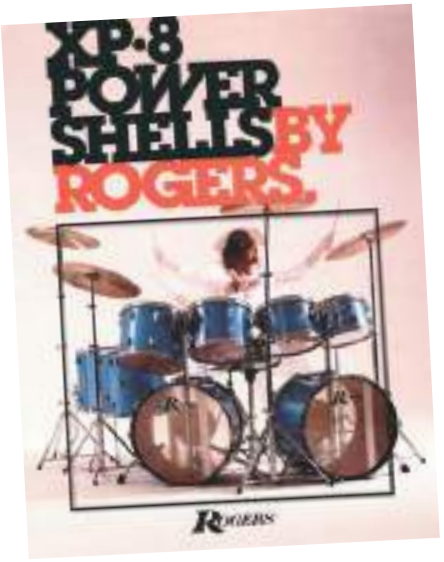
Van Humsberger

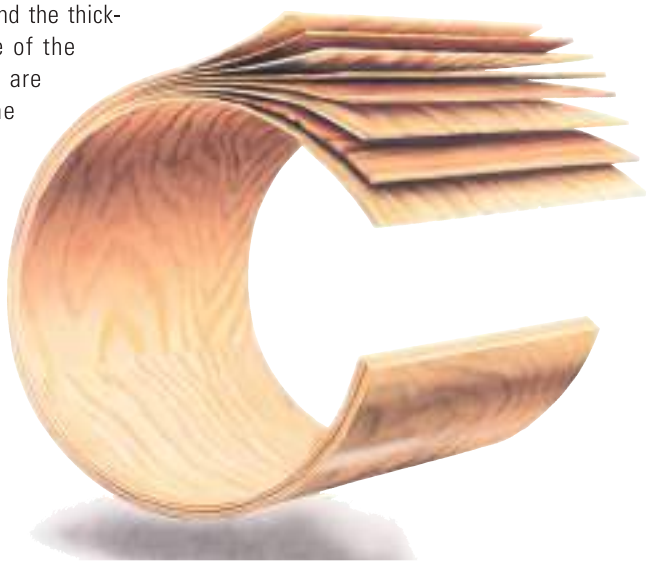
"Venting" the air from inside a shell can tend to "dry out" the drum sound. If you think that's what's happening in the case of your toms, you can conduct a simple experiment.

Cover the holes with a couple of strips of duct tape (on the insides of the shells). Use a criss-cross pattern to promote adhesion of the strips while doubling the thickness of the tape over the holes. Duct tape is designed to prevent air leakage, and is also reasonably reflective when it comes to sound.

If you can discern a noticeable difference in the resonance of the drums, you have several options. The first (and easiest) is simply to leave the tape in place and go with that sound. A more permanent option would be to replace the tape with a square of thin plastic or sheet metal, which could be flexed into the curved shape necessary to affix it to the inside of the shell. This could either be glued or secured with very small screws that don't penetrate to the outside of the shell.

Some drum restorers plug holes in shells with pieces of dowel cut to the size and shape of the hole and the thickness and curvature of the shell. These pieces are then glued into the shell. However, the larger the hole, the trickier this job is. A 1"-diameter hole is likely to be difficult to plug in this fashion.





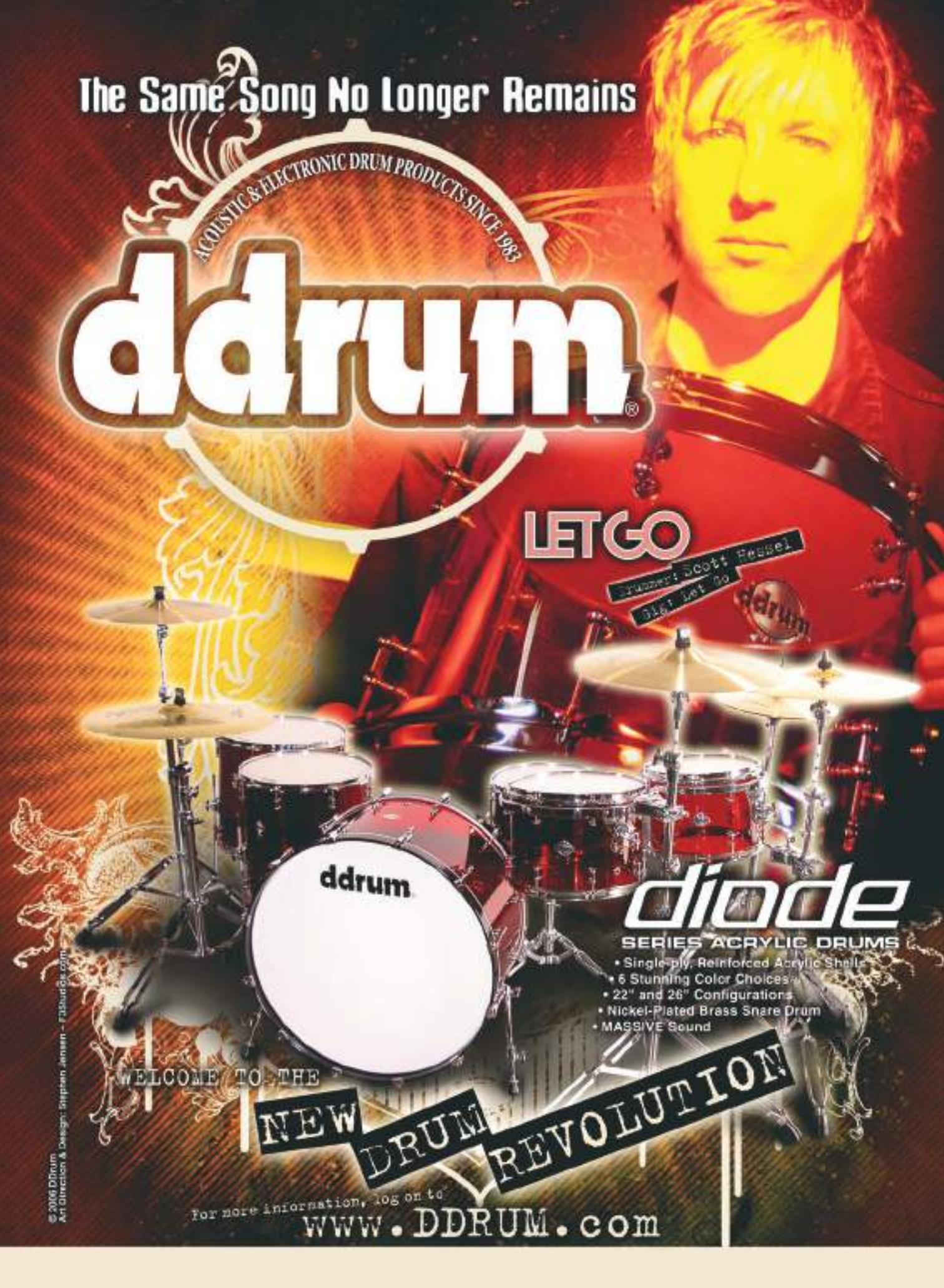
Drumset Versus Marching Snare Drums

My band is recording soon, and there are a couple of songs on which I want a marching snare drum sound. I was inspired by seeing Joey Jordison of Slipknot use a marching snare on the song "Blister Exists." What are the primary differences between a drumset snare drum and a marching snare drum?

Andrew Hoxter

The most obvious difference is that marching drums are generally much deeper than drumset models. Some are larger in diameter, as well. They also tend to have thick shells, and to be fitted with heavy-duty Kevlar or other composite drumheads designed to be tightened up to an extremely high tension, resulting in a "firecracker" response. They also often use snare-strand material that differs from the standard wire "snappy snares" found on most drumset snare drums.

You can get more information by going to the Web sites of manufacturers that produce both kinds of drums. These include Ludwig, Pearl, Premier, and Yamaha.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B20 By Sabian History

Could you tell me the history of Sabian's B20 cymbal series? The cymbal I have doesn't have the usual logo with the half circles under the word "Sabian." Instead, it features a small, written "Sabian," along with the designation "B20." It also says "made in Italy."

When and by whom were B20 cymbals made? Can you give me any idea of what the complete model lineup was, in terms of sizes of crashes, hi-hats, and rides?

E. Carino

Sabian customer service manager Robert Mason replies, "B20 By Sabian cymbals turn up once in a while, which I find amazing considering that they've been out of production for more than twenty years. The cymbals were manufactured between 1983 and 1984 by an Italian company named Tosco.

"Even in the early years of Sabian, we were looking for ways to expand the models we offered. B20 By Sabian was our first attempt at an entry- to mid-level cast cymbal. The cymbals were made from B20 bronze (hence their name). But in order to keep costs down, the B20 alloy used in the Tosco factory did not have the silver content that the alloy used in Sabian's 'home' factory in Canada did. In fact, it had no silver at all.

"In addition, where Canadian-made professional cymbals were manufactured by a multiple rolling process, B20 By Sabian cymbals were produced in the Tosco plant by pouring liquid bronze into a mold. After the metal hardened, the cymbal blanks were removed from the mold. The center hole was drilled, after which the blanks were lathed to the proper weight and then edged. Models included 14" hats, 16" and 18" crashes, and a 20" ride.

"Unfortunately, the B20 By Sabian line experienced considerable problems with premature breakage. So the line was discontinued in late 1984, and the whole idea of affordable B20-alloy cymbals was put on hold until a few years ago. That's when advances in production methods, as well as work by our R&D department, led to the introduction of Sabian's XS20 series."

Sabian's XS20 cymbals of today are the descendents of the B20 By Sabian line of the early 1980s.

Removing Paint From Inside Drumshells

I have a set of 1965 or '66 Ludwig drums that sound great. Unfortunately, some genius painted over the insides of the shells. Can I use paint stripper on a drumshell without damaging it? I also need to repaint the bass drum hoops. What kind of paint should I use? **Randy Hamilton**

According to *MD*'s drum historian, Harry Cangany, "In the mid-1960s, the insides of Ludwig shells were painted white. If you try to remove the user-applied paint with stripper, you'll probably remove the factory-applied white paint, too. You might try a product like Goof Off or Goo Gone, and try to lift the second color off in the hope of saving the white. It would probably be a good idea to try this on a small section first.

"The bass drum hoops were painted with black lacquer. If you put enamel on top of lacquer, the paints won't mix. You'll see a chemical reaction that's called 'alligatoring' because of the wrinkled look that occurs. If you can only use enamel, you must sand all the lacquer off first. Good luck."

Questions For MD's Drum Experts?

Send them to It's Questionable, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, or rvh@moderndrummer.com. Please include your full name with your question.

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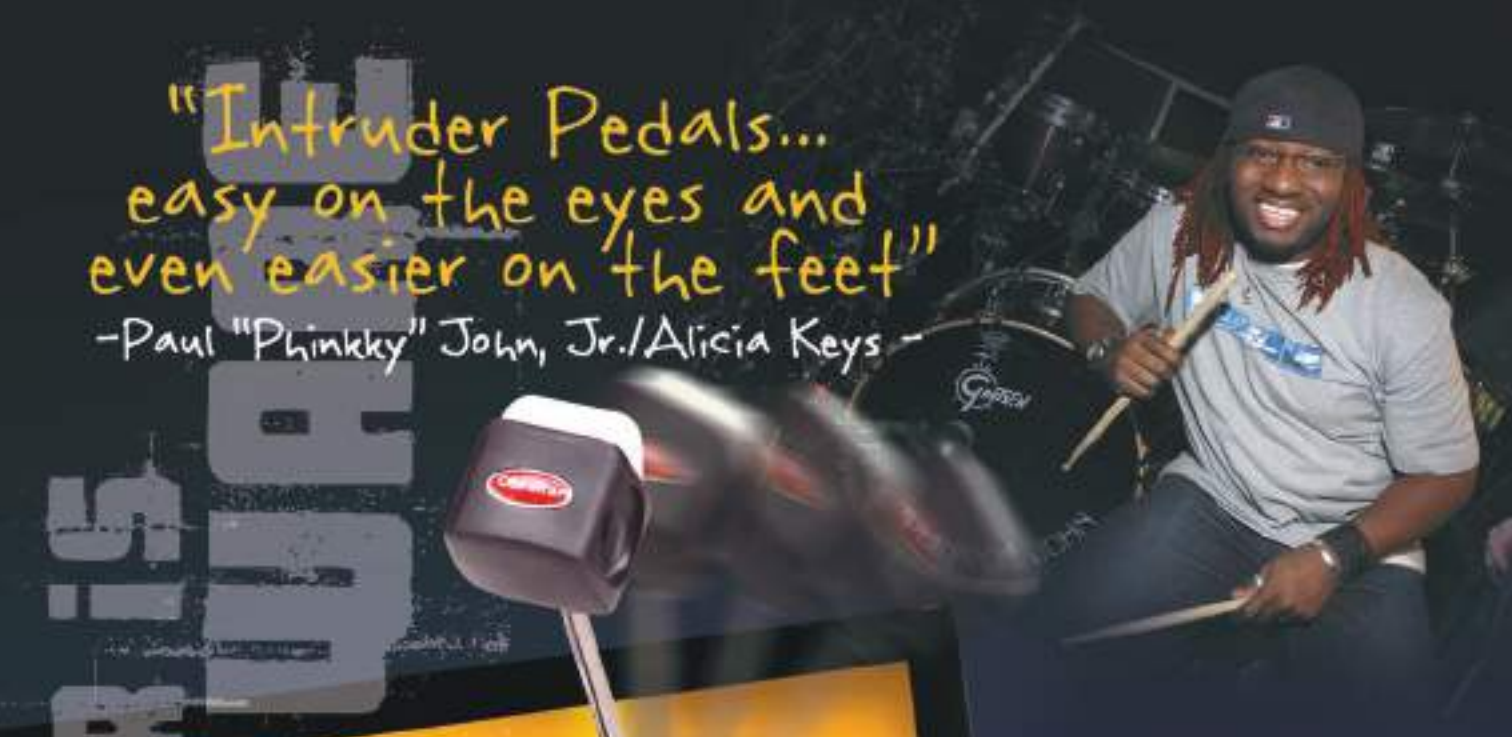

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Paul John Jr.

On Church Drumming And Touring

Paul La Raia

Q My family and I had the pleasure of seeing your powerful, passionate drumming with Alicia Keys at the Chicago Theater earlier this year. It excited me to read your article in the November issue of *Modern Drummer*; your sage advice on taking one's time and preparing one's self was truly inspirational. I thank you for your excellent insights.

I'm curious to know how one would go about being a church drummer. What was your experience like? Plus, do you find yourself combining spirituality within your drumming?

In addition, I would appreciate information on your full setup (the big band kit seen in the article photos), including cymbals, heads, and hardware. Thank you for your time and your presence. God bless you, and best of everything with your endeavors. **Brent Rolland**

A As far as being a church drummer goes, I grew up in the church. I was always where the music was when I was younger—waiting my turn to play. Eventually I got my chance. And yes, I do find myself always combining my spirituality with my playing, 'cause that's who I am.

The setup I used for the Alicia Keys tour included a Gretsch kit that featured 7x8, 7x10, and 7x12 rack toms, 14x13, 14x14, and 14x16 floor toms, an 18x20 bass drum, and $6^{1}/_{2}$x13 and 5x10 snare drums. I used DW 9000 series hardware, which is serious stuff.

My Zildjian cymbal setup included 8" and 10" A Custom splashes, 14", 16", 17", and 18" A Custom or K Session series crashes, a 20" K Custom ride, an 18" K Session series or flat ride, 14" and 16" Oriental China Trash models, 10" Special Recording hi-hats, 13" A Mastersound hi-hats, and 14" K Session series or A Mastersound hi-hats.

The heads were all by Remo, including PowerStroke 3 clears on the toms, a PowerStroke 4 clear on the bass drum, and Ambassadors with CS dots on the snare drums. And I used my own signature model Vic Firth drumsticks. Thanks for your questions, and God bless you.

Head And Pedal Tips From Deep Purple's

Ian Paice

Q I'm a drummer from Iceland. Deep Purple is my favorite band, and you are my favorite drummer. Unfortunately I missed the Deep Purple concert in Iceland last year, to my great regret.

I love the sound of your drums. I've noticed that you are playing a Pearl MMX series drumset. I also play a Pearl kit. What heads do you use on your drums (top and bottom)? And would you describe your pedal tension as loose or stiff? **Robert**

A The batter head on my snare and all the heads on the toms are Remo coated Ambassadors. The snare-side head is a Remo lightweight clear Ambassador model.

The bass drum batter is a PowerStroke 3. (It used to be a coated Ambassador as well, but now I prefer the PS3.) The front head on the bass drum is a Remo FiberSkyn 3, more for its look than anything else. The 26" bass drum is lined throughout with 4 cm–thick foam rubber.

My bass drum pedals have a loose to medium spring tension. The beaters smack the drumhead at dead center.

Thanks for the kind words. I'm sorry you missed us in Iceland, but here's to next time. Cheers!

Andrew Lepley

Tommy is currently performing on tour with Mötley Crüe.
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David Garibaldi's
Ghost Note Techniques

Sean Vennett

Q I'm a beginning to intermediate drummer. I play with traditional grip, and I'm finding it difficult to play a ghost note (or even normal-volume note) on the snare immediately following an accented note. This is hard with 8th notes, and even harder with 16th notes. I end up accenting the following note as well.

While I'm confident that I'll get better with practice, is there anything I should be concentrating on while practicing—such as what my wrist, index finger, ring finger, and so forth should be doing? How does one keep from accenting the following note without wanting to? **John Sunderland**

A You're not alone, John. The problem you're experiencing is common among all of us. Not being there to see your problem in person makes it a bit difficult to answer. But I will offer the following suggestions, all of which I employ personally, and which have been a big help when I wanted to build something into my playing.

The first thing I'd say (and I'm sure you've heard this before) is to be patient. Building the proper techniques to play the music you're interested in takes time. Find a reputable teacher who can monitor your progress. Having a good teacher is like money in the bank, and can provide much inspiration. Also, watch and really *study* DVDs or videos of drummers who demonstrate the particular skill you're trying to acquire. And see those drummers live, if you can. Seeing the technique in action can answer lots of questions. Finally, practice the technique that addresses the particular problem area. Do this on a daily basis. This can be done with the aid of a teacher, or with another drummer you know who can help you with a problem.

All of the above being said, the most helpful thing to me has always been to use my ear and my imagination, and then go to work. If you have the sounds in your head, with practice you can reproduce them on the drums.

For your particular issue, think of two volume levels: soft (ghosted notes) and loud (accents). Play a stroke on your snare drum as softly as you can. This would be the ghosted-note volume. Then play a louder note on your snare drum. This would be an accented note. These are the two sounds you want to reproduce.

The following exercises involve an accent followed by a ghosted note. I'm assuming that because you mentioned traditional grip, your concern is with your left hand. As you can see, these exercises cover your problem, but in both hands. Focus on making your hands do what you want them to. This will take some time, but you'll enjoy a big payoff down the road.

Repeat Bar
A Classic Quote From MD's Past

"I would rather see someone playing a Ramones song, spot-on, with heart and soul than play some lick they learned out of a book, with all the chops in the world."
Studio and touring star **Josh Freese**, March 2003

Alex Solca

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311's Chad Sexton
A New City For Drummers

Chad in his new drum shop.

Last summer, 311 released *Don't Tread On Me*, whose title track reached number 1 on *Billboard's* Modern Rock chart. Based on that success and loyal fan support, the band has been touring quite a bit lately. The highlight show of their tours is 311 Day, which occurs every March 11. According to Chad, "That show is for our hardcore fans. We've been known to play for five hours on that one."

When Sexton's not occupied with 311, he's working on his new project, a drum shop called Chad Sexton's Drum City. It's based on a store that Chad frequented as a young drummer in Omaha, Nebraska called Joe Voda's Drum City. "That shop was something special," Chad explains. "It did a lot for the drummer kids in the area."

Sexton says that his store, which is located at 4723 Lankershim Boulevard in North Hollywood, California, is striving to offer drummers more variety and options. "I want it to represent many drum companies and accessories instead of just a few," he insists. "Before corporations took over, the drum store was a place where drummers could hang out, with lessons going on and older drummers hanging out with younger drummers, and with loads of knowledge being exchanged. In my opinion, that environment doesn't exist anymore. I'm trying to bring it back." **Robyn Flans**

Trivium's Travis Smith Drumming Ascendancy

Travis Smith has very fast feet. He proved this when his band, Trivium, performed at Ozzfest last summer. But Smith also proved it off the stage. While Tama was holding its Fastest Feet Contest, in which fans had their kick drumming clocked by a Drumometer, the Ozzfest drummers competed amongst themselves—and Smith won. "I just kind of flew through it," he admits. This isn't surprising, considering his speedy, adrenaline-filled drumming on *Ascendancy*, the 2005 album that made Trivium one of the hottest acts in metal.

Smith has been a "metal" drummer since age five. "I would build these massive kits out of pots and pans," he says, "and I would hang the pot lids with rubber bands so I could have cymbals." After his dad got him "a little drumkit from Sears," Smith took lessons, played in school bands, and eventually formed a metal group for a high school battle of the bands contest. That band became Trivium.

On *Ascendancy*, Smith has progressed since his early kitchen performances. He plays many tom-oriented bits and ghost notes, and his double kick work is nothing short of bionic. Smith cooks up a rhythmic stew during "Pull Harder On The Strings Of Your Martyr," with an opening solo and dynamics inspired by Vinnie Paul. "People ask me about that section a lot," says the drummer, who uses a nine-piece Tama Superstar kit.

Meanwhile, in concert, Smith plays so hard and sweats so profusely that he's been known to slide right off his throne. (It happened in France three gigs in a row.) He thanks Lars Ulrich for inspiring him to play with such gusto. "Some say Lars looks like a fish out of water," Smith says. "It's because he's so loose, yet tight, while flying around back there. I think that's cool." **Jeff Perlah**

The Like's Tennessee Thomas Pop Drumming Legacy

LA's buzz-generating female rock trio, The Like, plays classic, song-based pop in the style of The Pretenders, The Sundays, and The Bangles—a sound that brings a serious breath of fresh air to a stifling scene that's begging for any kind of innovative breeze. "So many bands are manufactured now," says the band's twenty-one-year-old drummer, Tennessee Thomas. "But for us it all came together naturally, through our mutual passion for this kind of music."

Tennessee formed The Like with guitarist-vocalist Elizabeth "Z" Berg and bassist Charlotte Froom when she was just sixteen. But the band shares such an amazing chemistry—evident on their remarkable debut, *Are You Thinking What I'm Thinking*—you'd think they've been playing together for twenty years.

Blessed with perfect timing and an intuitive, easy groove, Tennessee's distinctively punchy drum parts are clean, classic, and always perfect for the song. Thomas got much of her formal drum education while playing in her high school band. She's also picked up a few pointers from her father, famed drummer Pete Thomas, best known for his work with Elvis Costello. "Growing up," she offers, "I heard my dad play every day. I learned the drums' *place* in a song. If there's a special lyric or guitar riff, it should be given the opportunity to be heard. Being a good drummer, to me, is about finding the right place to fill in the gaps, or to leave gaps."

When asked about her favorite drummers, it's little surprise that she admits, "I definitely think my dad is the best, but Charlie Watts is probably my favorite drummer. I also like Maureen Tucker of The Velvet Underground, as well as Mitch Mitchell, who is one of my dad's favorite drummers. I think he's absolutely amazing. On our record, I just played what I felt worked for the song. Pretty much everything I play is very basic. We were just talking about how Phil Rudd of AC/DC holds it down so thoroughly and plays, like, three fills in the band's entire collection of songs. I have that same approach, and I know it irritates my dad that I play so few fills. [laughs] Hopefully there will be some fills on our next record." **Gail Worley**

Ryan Adams' Brad Pemberton

Drumming By The Seat Of His Pants

Danny Clinch

It was a good thing that drummer Brad Pemberton left his kit set up in the studio. He was there last year with Ryan Adams & The Cardinals, apparently racing through material at Lono Studios in New York City. "We never heard any of the songs on *Cold Roses* or *Jackson City Nights* before we went in to record," Pemberton admits. "We'd walk into the studio and Ryan would say, 'Record.' We were literally making it up on the fly. We didn't rehearse. It was just 'go.' If we started and ended a song without screwing up, then that was the take."

Pemberton recorded thirty-two songs that way—as he calls it, "Drumming by the seat of my pants—warts and all. For some of the tracks, I was like, 'Oh God, I wish I hadn't played that.' But Ryan was like, 'No way, man, that's staying. That's great. That's *gold*.'"

Pemberton left a Pearl kit with Zildjian cymbals set up and ready to go. To vary sounds, he used Pro-Mark sticks, Hot Rods, and brushes. "On *Cold Roses* I used brushes on half the songs," he explains, "even the title track, which is sort of a heavier rock song. I used brushes only because I didn't know what the tune was about. Ryan started playing, I had brushes in my hands, and that's the way it went down. When we play the tune live, I use sticks, and it's much more rocking."

Pemberton has been playing with Adams for the past six years, and the two have a strong base of communication. "Ryan's first instrument was the drums," Brad says, "so his right hand, when he's strumming a guitar, is just like his hi-hat. He and I also have this weird, almost creepy way that we lock up and read each other's minds. We lock right in."

David John Farinella

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Less Than Jake's Vinnie Playing For The Out Crowd

If there's anything Less Than Jake's Vinnie isn't, it's "just the drummer." Vinnie, who doesn't use his last name, has been the pop-punk/ska pulse behind Florida-based Less Than Jake for well over a decade. The multi-talented player is also the band's primary lyricist, holds a degree in education, owns a toy company called Monkey Vs. Robot, and co-founded a successful record label (Fueled By Ramen). Vinnie's current focus is squarely on his drumming on Less Than Jake's eighth and newest full-length, *In With The Out Crowd*. The recording found him back in the studio with producer Howard Benson, whose credits include My Chemical Romance, P.O.D., and Hoobastank. Benson also produced Less Than Jake's 1999 album, *Hello Rockview*.

Vinnie says that Benson got him playing with more groove. That isn't easy for a band that the drummer insists is a live band first and foremost. "Everything is pushed when we play live," Vinnie explains. "Everything has a certain forward momentum to it. We spend between a hundred fifty and two hundred days a year on tour, so it's hard to break that. But if Howard taught me anything on this record, it's that even if the song is played five beats per minute slower in the studio, once everything is layered on it, it still feels super fast. So I brought the tempos down, and it let the guitars and drums breathe more."

As for his performance on the new album, Vinnie says that his main goal was to offer variety with each track's drum parts. "The drumming is definitely more intricate in terms of offbeats and time signatures," he says. "We have a song that's in 3/4, which is totally different from what we've done in the past. Usually when you're playing pop-punk or ska, it's in 4/4 and there's a certain feel to it. This time around, I wanted each track to have a different feel from the drums, different parts, different fill patterns, and accents."

Seated behind his usual four-piece setup in the studio, Vinnie notes that it's important for him to have a perspective on the kit's room sound while he's tracking. "I don't put on a pair of headphones," he admits. "I just use one side of the headphones to listen to the track, and with my other ear I listen to the drums themselves. That way, I don't overplay. I don't hear just the processed drums that are going through the board. It's a bit more controlled than, say, a live scenario, where you're just going all out."

Waleed Rashidi

NEWS

Gary Husband, Ralph Salmins and **Simon Phillips** are on Ray Russell's latest, *Goodbye Svengali.*

Fabrizio Moretti is on The Strokes' latest, *First Impressions Of The Earth.*

Tommy Joyner, **Steven Keller**, **Matt Horn**, and **Don Piper** play drums on various cuts of Lilys' new album, *Everything Is Wrong.*

Colonel Robert Morris has been the guest drummer with the Grand Ole Opry Road Show. He's also been recording for the Rockabilly Hall Of Fame. For more info, go to www.meetrobertmorris.com.

American Idol finalist Constantine Maroulis is the lead singer of the band Pray For The Soul Of Betty, with **Hamboussi** on drums.

Xavier Muriel is on Buckcherry's first new album in four years, *Fifteen.*

Alvino Bennett has been recording with Guitar Shorty and playing gigs with The Jason Sinay Band.

Simon Phillips and **Gregg Bissonette** lay it down on the new release by bassist/multi-instrumentalist Phil Soussan, *Vibrate.*

Sammy Merendino is featured in the Cyndi Lauper & Friends VH-1 program, *Decades Rock Live.*

Congratulations to Anthrax drummer **Charlie Benante** and his wife, Sandra, on the birth of their daughter, Mia. Shadows Fall drummer **Jason Bittner** filled in on some live dates while Charlie took time off to be with his family.

Torry Castellano and The Donnas are on The Rock & Roller Tour, promoting A&E's new series, *Rollergirls.*

Janet Weiss is on Quasi's latest, *When The Going Gets Dark.*

Mike Wengren is on tour with Disturbed to promote their new CD, *Ten Thousand Fists.* Joining them is **Phil Arcuri** with Dry Kill Logic and **Ben Graves** with Dope.

Sam P.J. Glorioso can he heard on two new Rick Ray CDs, *Second Hand Smoke* and *Temporary World.*

Joe Franco can be heard on Eddie Ojeda's solo release, *Axes 2 Axes.* He will also be touring Europe with The Band Of Steel.

Kenny Wollesen is playing drums and percussion on Jesse Harris's latest disc, *Mineral.*

Camille Gainer has a new DVD, *The Adventures Of Drummette.Com.* For more info, visit her Web site, www.camillegainer.com.

Denny Seiwell has been doing dates with Kenny Wayne Shepherd's band. Denny is also producing and playing on big band tracks used in the film *Bobby.* (The film is about the night Bobby Kennedy was shot. It was written by actor Emilio Estevez.) Denny also appears in the film alongside actress Demi Moore, who is the singer in the band.

Damon Richardson is on *Sleep Is The Enemy*, the latest release by the Toronto-based trio Danko Jones.

Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson recently released his second solo CD, *Babies Making Babies, Vol. 2: The Misery Strikes.* Ahmir's band The Roots also has a new release out, *Game Theory.*

The **Carl Palmer** Band will be touring the US in May and June. According to Carl, "This is a trio, like ELP, but we've replaced the keyboards with some very powerful guitar interpretations of that classic music." Among the songs featured in the show will be "Tarkus," "Fanfare For The Common Man," and "Hoedown." For tour dates, go to www.moderndrummer.com.

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Zutty Singleton was born on 5/14/1898,
Mel Lewis on 5/10/29,
John Bonham on 5/31/48.

Billy Higgins passed away on 5/4/01,
Elvin Jones on 5/18/04.

On 5/2/79, The Who perform their first concert after the death of **Keith Moon**, with **Kenney Jones** on drums. Also on this day, the movie *Quadrophenia,* based on The Who's album of the same name, premiers in London.

On 5/2/91, Nirvana (with **Dave Grohl** on drums and **Butch Vig** producing) resumes recording songs at Sound City and Devonshire studios in California for their sophomore album, *Nevermind*, which features the singles "Smells Like Teen Spirit" and "Come As You Are."

On 5/6/05, The Beatles (with **Ringo Starr**) earn their sixth Recording Industry Association Of America Diamond Award (recognizing ten million copies shipped) for their 2000 compilation album, *The Beatles 1.* This breaks a tie with Led Zeppelin, who have earned five of the awards.

Happy Birthday!

Freddie Gruber
(educator): 5/27/27

Levon Helm
(The Band): 5/26/42

Billy Cobham
(drum legend): 5/16/44

Bill Kreutzmann
(Grateful Dead): 5/7/46

Butch Trucks
(Allman Brothers): 5/11/47

Bill Ward
(Black Sabbath): 5/5/48

Bill Bruford
(Yes, Earthworks): 5/17/48

Paulinho Da Costa
(percussion great): 5/31/48

Prairie Prince
(The Tubes): 5/7/50

Mike Balter
(mallet maker): 5/7/52

Sly Dunbar
(reggae master): 5/10/52

Alex Van Halen
(Van Halen): 5/8/53

Mark Herndon
(Alabama): 5/11/55

Stan Lynch
(ex-Tom Petty): 5/21/55

Will Kennedy
(ex-Yellowjackets): 5/9/57

Mel Gaynor
(Simple Minds): 5/29/59

Dave Abbruzzese
(ex-Pearl Jam): 5/17/64

Charley Drayton
(sessions): 5/9/65

Sean Kinney
(Alice In Chains): 5/27/66

Alan White
(Oasis): 5/26/72

Nick Tosco
(Justincase): 5/1/85

RT-10 Series Drum Triggers With acoustic-drum triggering more popular than ever, Roland proudly announces a new line of advanced triggers: the RT-10K (for kick drums), dual-trigger RT-10S (for snare), and RT-10T (for toms). Physically smaller than their predecessors, the new triggers are easier to position. Best of all, they feature advanced trigger-sensing technology for amazing dynamics and response.

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by Rick Van Horn
photos by Jim Esposito

KEY NOTES

- Subtle but classy natural-wood finish
- Acoustic consistency between toms and bass drum
- Great snare-drum performance
- Limited floor-tom height

You've probably noticed that Ludwig drums have been enjoying a recent resurgence in visibility, including full-page ads featuring high-profile artists like Green Day's Tré Cool and The Killers' Ronnie Vannucci. Considering this new buzz, as well as how long it's been since we reviewed a high-end Ludwig kit, we figured that this would be a good time to check one out. Ludwig obliged by sending a Quilted Makorè Classic Maple kit. It included an 18x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, 12x14 and 14x16 floor toms, and a 5x14 chromed brass snare drum, along with a professional hardware package.

Simple Elegance

Quilted makorè is the newest offering in Ludwig's collection of exotic veneers. The quilting is created by a special way of cutting the timber from the makorè tree, a type of

African black cherry. This results in an unusual three-dimensional effect that's rich and deep.

Some drummers love the subtle look of a high-quality natural-wood finish, while others prefer a more dramatic colored lacquer or perhaps a sparkle finish. But even if your tastes run toward the glitzy, you'd still have to appreciate the classy, fine-furniture appearance of the makorè veneer.

That being said, there's an attractive simplicity about the look of our review kit. Not *plain*, by any means—just clean and uncluttered. The tom mount is solid but not massive, as are the leg brackets on the floor toms. The Mini-Classic lugs read "Ludwig" without calling attention to themselves. The small oval badges fit right in with the subtle appearance of the finish. You look at this kit and immediately think: "That's a nice set of drums," as opposed to "That's a pretty complex piece of engineering."

The only exception to the above is the rack-tom suspension system. I'm not bothered by the metal bands around the drums; we've seen so many of those that they hardly register in our view anymore. But the plates that hold the mounting brackets are much larger than they need to be—as are the black rubber gaskets fitted between the brackets and the plates. I'm sure that those gaskets are universal models meant to fit several different mounts. But such an economy-minded feature looks tacky on such an otherwise attractive high-end kit.

Ironically, what I like about the *look* of the tom holder causes me concern about its functionality. As I said, it's not massive, which is good in terms of cosmetics. However, the casting that mounts to the bass drum shell seems awfully small to me, without many square inches of contact with the shell to spread out the strain. It was easy for me to move the entire tom assembly with one hand, causing the bass drum shell to flex beneath the mount. The small rack toms on our review kit might not pose a problem. But with larger, heavier drums, or under prolonged heavy hitting, I'd be a little concerned about potential damage to the bass drum shell.

And Speaking Of Shells...

Ludwig Classic Maple drums all feature 9-ply, 6-mm shells with no reinforcing hoops, regardless of size. These relatively thin, lightweight shells are in contrast to what a lot of companies are doing now in terms of different shell thicknesses for different drums.

Every manufacturer has its own design concepts, of course. But I will say that having bass drums and toms with the same shell thickness seemed to produce a very consistent acoustic character among the Ludwig drums. They definitely sounded like they belonged together as a set.

So Let's Talk About Sound

A lot of adjectives are thrown around in an attempt to describe a drumkit's sound. And many of them fit the sound of the Classic Maple kit. Those would include adjectives like "warm," "full," "clean," "clear," and "solid." But in the case of this Ludwig set, I'd add "comfortable" and "satisfying." It just felt great to sit behind them and play.

The toms came fitted with Ludwig's own clear WeatherMaster heavy one-ply heads, top and bottom. While these heads aren't big over-the-counter sellers, they're still professional-quality models, and they gave the toms a deep sound with plenty of lively attack and penetration. The 12x14 and 14x16 floor toms had the deep pitches that you'd expect from their diameter, with quick projection and relatively quick decay provided by their shallow depths.

The small rack toms and shallow floor toms might peg our review kit as a "fusion"-type configuration. That being the case, the 18x22 bass drum would seem the odd man out. ("Fusion" kits tend to include 20" bass drums, most of which are 16" deep.) Still, there's nothing wrong with having quick response on top supported by a serious foundation below. And that's what the Classic Maple bass drum provided. It had a clear single-ply batter fitted with an internal muffling ring, which helped to control overtones. With nothing inside and no hole in the front head, the bass drum generated a deep and meaty "whump" that could be felt across the room. A hole in the front head would likely give it a bit more focused punch.

Meeting An Old Friend

The snare drum that came with our review kit was the LB400B 5x14 chromed brass model with Imperial lugs and Supra-Phonic strainer—better known to drum history students as the Supra-Phonic 400. For almost fifty years, this is what most drummers have meant when they refer to a "chrome snare."

The reason I make such a big deal about the history of this model is that it set a standard for the sound of a metal snare drum. And our review model, right out of the box, re-demonstrated that standard in no uncertain terms. I've reviewed a lot

The Ludwig Supra-Phonic 400 set the standard for "chrome snares."

of snare drums in the past twenty-three years, and many of them have had more distinctive individual characteristics than the Supra-Phonic 400. But very few have offered the total package of clarity, response, projection, tuning range, versatility, simple-but-elegant appearance, and sheer playing enjoyment that this venerable model still does. I'll be honest: When I took it out of the box and played a few rudiments and rolls on it, my immediate response was, "Now *that's* a snare drum."

The shallow depth of the 12x14 floor tom created a height limitation, even at full leg extension.

Hardware

Ludwig must have had a low-sitting drummer in mind for this kit, because the hardware package included an LM922SSL low-profile snare stand. And the highest I could get the 12x14 floor tom positioned—even with the floor tom legs at maximum length—was 28$^1/_2$" off the floor, which is a little lower than I prefer. (The 14x16 drum could go about 1$^1/_2$" higher.) Now, a regular-height snare stand is readily available from Ludwig for drummers who might need it. But I'm not sure about longer floor-tom legs. If they're not available, some drummers who sit high may have problems with height limitations on these shallow floor toms.

The bass drum featured Elite folding bass drum spurs, as opposed to the traditional Ludwig curved spurs that protrude from the shell. I much prefer the newer model; I think it holds a bass drum in place better than the older design did.

The straight cymbal stand, disappearing-boom stand, and hi-hat stand that came with the kit were all from Ludwig's heavy-duty double-braced 900 series. The tubing is fairly large, giving the stands a somewhat massive look. But all tilters and height adjustments worked well, and the stands seemed well made and sturdy. The hi-hat featured a straightforward direct-pull chain linkage, as well as an easy-to-adjust internal spring. Nothing fancy, just solid and functional.

I was pleasantly surprised by the bass drum pedal. Ludwig hasn't been particularly known for its pedals since the glory days of the Speed King. But this pedal (unromantically designated the LM815FPR) proved to be simple, efficient, easy to adjust, and smooth in operation. It features a lightweight design, a minimalistic footboard, and a double–chain drive system. I got it set up, running, and comfortable in a matter of minutes. About my only gripe with this pedal is that its hoop clamp is adjusted from the side (convenient) by means of a drumkey (inconvenient). A key is provided on a clip beneath the footboard, but I'd still prefer a wing bolt.

Our review kit featured rotating Elite spurs, rather than Ludwig's familiar curved models.

Conclusion

I enjoyed our "re-discovery" of Ludwig's Classic Maple kit. Everything about it reminded me of why Ludwig drums epitomized the quintessential American drum sound in the 1960s and '70s. True, the company has undergone changes since then, including the relocation of manufacturing from Ludwig's historic Chicago plant to Monroe, North Carolina. But the drums are still made in America, and they still offer that classic Ludwig character. If you're familiar with that character, you know what I mean. If you're not, you owe it to yourself to *get* familiar. You just may find yourself drawn to a genuine American icon.

THE NUMBERS

L8275XX68WR Outfit (Quilted Makorè) $5,220

Includes an 18x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, 12x14 and 14x16 floor toms, and a 5x14 Supra-Phonic 400 chromed brass snare drum. 900 series hardware package includes a low-profile snare stand, straight and disappearing-boom cymbal stands, a hi-hat stand, and an LM815FPR bass drum pedal.

(219) 522-1675, www.ludwig-drums.com.

Quick Looks

Evans EC2 Tom Heads And EMAD Resonant Heads

Evans' new EC2 Edge Control tom heads were developed in conjunction with drummer/inventor Bob Gatzen. Each head features a control ring mounted under two plies of 7-mil film. Stress-relief slots are placed in the control ring to let it flex with the vibration of the head. The idea is for the ring to *control* edge vibration without *eliminating* it, in order to isolate and dampen higher overtones and enhance low end and attack. Evans further states that the EC2 will not choke at higher tuning ranges, or lose its full-bodied presence when tuned low.

That's a tall order, but the EC2 meets it pretty effectively. Considering its design and appearance, there's no avoiding comparisons between the EC2 and another twin-ply head with a self-control feature: Remo's venerable Pinstripe. But where a Pinstripe tends to produce a deep, warm, mellow tonality, we found the EC2 to be a little brighter, with more attack and sustain and a little less overall depth. It sort of "split the difference" between the performance of a Pinstripe and that of an unmuffled clear twin-ply head. As advertised, the tuning range was extensive, and the heads performed consistently well across that entire range.

If you're looking for more tom control without sacrificing sonic penetration, the EC2s might be just the ticket. They're offered in sizes from 8" to 16", at prices ranging from $26 to $32.

More and more attention has been given to front bass drum heads in recent years, in terms of their effect on the drum's overall sound. (About time, too.) Evans' newest contribution to this effort is the EMAD (Externally Mounted Adjustable Damping) Resonant head. It's a 7-mil single-ply head with a fixed internal ring and a 5" port. Its unique feature is the inclusion of two interchangeable foam rings designed to dampen overtones around the edge of the port. This system is supposed to focus the pitch and enhance attack. At first glance it seems like overkill. After all, how much effect can the edge of the hole in a front bass drum head really have?

Quite a bit, it turns out. When we experimented with the rings, the firmer of the two helped focus the drum's attack, giving it ehanced clarity with no appreciable reduction of sustain. The softer ring acted more as a "cushion" for the sound escaping from the drum, giving it a slightly deeper sound, a mellower tone, and moderately controlled sustain. Since the rings are easily installed or removed, they can be used to help adapt the drum to any acoustic environment. (Hey, every little bit helps!) EMAD Resonant heads are available in 18" to 24" sizes at prices ranging from $67 to $80.

(800) 323-2746, www.evansdrumheads.com.

Pork Pie Custom Thrones

Pork Pie offers very functional and sturdy thrones with an extra shot of pizzazz. Their thrones are custom-made to your specifications from twelve different vinyl side options and twenty fabric top options. This selection allows for hundreds of possible color schemes.

If that isn't enough variety for you, the thrones are also offered with three different tripod bases: standard (for most players), a shorter model (for those who like to sit a bit lower), and an adjustable hydraulic model (similar to the office chairs at your job). All the tripod bases feature very sturdy center posts with double-braced legs that fold quickly and easily for transport and have large rubber feet to prevent sliding under hard playing conditions. Every throne is tested with a 300-lb. load for twenty-four hours before leaving the factory.

The hydraulic model has a 6" rubber-tipped height-adjusting handle that screws on and off so that there are no protruding parts to hang up and catch on you or your trap case during transport. The underside of each seat has a substantial four-pointed cross-braced mount that uses a large cast-metal receiver for the tripod post. All Pork Pie thrones are available with an optional backrest for $30 additional charge.

Our review group included standard and hydraulic bases and three seat models. The standard base adjusted the throne from 22" to 28" in height via a piano-stool threaded center shaft. The hydraulic base adjusted from 20" to 27" in height instantly at the touch of the side-adjusting handle.

The seats included a red, white, & blue Star-side Round Top model, a pink sparkle–sided Round Top model with a plush top, and a Big Boy model with black sparkle sides and a black plush top. The Big Boy seat has leg cutouts and looks similar to a vintage "beach cruiser" bicycle or farm tractor seat. It also has a slightly raised rear lip that adds to comfort.

Simply put, thrones like this can add a missing level of *fun* to your kit. Musicians who play other instruments frequently add style and color to accessorize their overall look. This might be for visual appeal to their audience, or it might just be for themselves. Perhaps you've owned your set for quite a while, and you need that missing "new car smell" to liven up your playing or give you a new outlook. Well, a distinctive Pork Pie throne might just be what the doctor ordered—in more ways than one. Not only are these thrones way cool, they're also extremely comfortable, owing to the 6" of high-grade foam padding under the seat.

My personal preference was the hydraulic Big Boy throne. It adjusts to micro-levels of height on the fly, without your needing to wait for a song break—or even getting off the seat. I've felt for years that a seat with leg cutouts provides maximum freedom for leg movement for double bass drumming or fast hi-hat playing.

At $270 for a Big Boy/hydraulic model and $280 for a Star-sided Round Top/standard model, Pork Pie's prices might be perceived as high. But, as in the fashion world, couture costs. And let's face it: Style and quality count!

All thrones are made to order. Four weeks' delivery time is standard.

(818) 340-2063, www.porkpiedrums.com.

Russ Barbone

Zildjian A Fast Crash And Splash Cymbals

Familiar Sound...Faster Response

by Paul Bielewicz

KEY NOTES

- Bright and natural, with quick response and decay time
- Soft, "rubbery" feel provides satisfying playability
- Paper-thin weight would not endure prolonged heavy hitting

Zildjian has introduced a line of Fast crash and splash cymbals to complement the classic A Zildjian series. The "fast" quality primarily comes from a very thin weight (classified by Zildjian as paper-thin) and a smaller-than-normal bell. This combination allows a cymbal's ring to decay more quickly than it otherwise would.

Included in our sample batch were all of the crashes and splashes being offered. These include 14", 15", 16", 17", and 18" sizes for the crashes, and 8", 10", and 12" for the splashes. The cymbals are offered in a traditional finish.

In General

Our initial impression of these cymbals was that they were indeed fast—a quality that was apparent in their attack as well as their decay time. They were also what I'd describe as "predictable," meaning that each of the cymbals possessed characteristics indicative of the A Zildjian line as a whole, only with faster response and decay time. Zildjian describes the A line as "bright, full-bodied, and natural." To this I might add "familiar, musical, and versatile." The A Fast models would fit in with and complement virtually any cymbal setup. Their versatility would make them appropriate for most kinds of music (with exceptions noted below).

Because the Fast crashes and splashes are so thin, they're not designed to be mercilessly pounded. That's not to say that they're too delicate to be played, but they're obviously better suited for pop, country, or jazz than for something heavier. Not only might their weight be too thin to endure prolonged exposure to heavy hitting, but their limited volume potential would cause them to get lost in music that doesn't suit their more subtle nature.

Splashes

The 8" Fast splash possessed many of the sound characteristics one might expect from a splash of this size. It was bright, high-pitched, and extremely quick. No sooner was it struck than it seemed to get out of the way.

The 10" splash was also high-pitched and bright. Although its "fast" nature

was apparent, this cymbal could be described as the most traditional-sounding of the group of splashes, and would probably be the most versatile.

The 12" splash possessed characteristics similar to those noted for the 8" and 10" splashes. Although its larger diameter gave it a slightly lower pitch than those of its two siblings, it still proved versatile, and it would fit in well with most cymbal setups.

Crashes

The 14" and 15" crashes were very bright, yet refined. In fact, the 14" was surprisingly complex. A glancing blow produced a satisfying explosion with multiple underlying overtones that developed and rang out with complementary pitches. The 15" was not quite as complex, but it still projected a sweet sound with a slightly shorter decay time than a traditional 15" would possess.

The 16" crash was the most representative of the classic A Zildjian sound, but with faster response and decay time. It also had a slightly lower pitch than its traditional A-line counterparts, due to its thinner weight. This proved to be a very versatile crash cymbal.

The 17" crash possessed much of the complexity evident in its 14" sibling. As its initial explosion decayed, an array of overtones in varying pitches became evident. Seventeen inches is an interesting size for a crash cymbal; it can bridge the gap between the bright, crisp sound one would expect from a 16" crash, and the sustain (and sometimes darker sound) one might expect from an 18". The 17" Fast crash proved this point: It was bright enough to give a quick punctuation at the end of a fill, but robust enough to build some volume.

Zildjian describes the feel of the Fast line as "soft and buttery," with plenty of playability. This was more evident on the 18" crash than on any of the others. In many ways, the 18" crash best embodied the positive characteristics of the line as a whole. It was very satisfying to play with everything from a glancing blow to a sustained wash to a ride pattern on the surface. Even the bell sounded great, despite the cymbal's light weight.

Conclusion

The A Fast crashes are an excellent supplement to Zildjian's familiar A line. They provide all of the positive characteristics that drummers have come to expect from a time-tested formula, but with quicker response and decay. They're very satisfying to play on, and they can accompany almost any cymbal setup or type of music with their complex yet refined nature.

THE NUMBERS

8" Fast Splash	$128
10" Fast Splash	$150
12" Fast Splash	$174
14" Fast Crash	$218
15" Fast Crash	$239
16" Fast Crash	$264
17" Fast Crash	$290
18" Fast Crash	$312

(781) 871-2200, www.zildjian.com.

From Birth

Hideko Mekuda Yamaha Craftsman Profile
Job Title: Wood Sanding Specialist Years Experience: 23 years
"Yamaha Drums has always been innovative in their finishing processes. A lot of these innovations come from incorporating the same lacquering and buffing techniques used on our world-renowned pianos. The sanding process is one of the most important steps in preparing for the paint finish. Having perfectly smooth shells for the painting process is why each Yamaha drum is as beautiful as a piece of art."

Innovation

Whether recording in the studio, performing live, or creating new sound sources, Russ has chosen Yamaha Drums as his tools of innovation on various recordings that total sales of more than 26 million albums.

Did you know...
At Yamaha Drums, we have ALWAYS created and lacquered ALL of our own shells AND made our own hardware.

Yamaha quality from Birth to Performance, from our hands to yours...who makes your drums?

To Performance
Yamaha Drum Artist Profile Russ Miller
Who Russ Has Worked With: Ray Charles, Tina Turner, Bobby Caldwell, Hillary Duff, Nelly Furtado... just to name a few.
"Every recording I do requires me to create something unique and innovative. I need to approach each job with a fresh and new state of mind. For over 20 years, Yamaha Drums have been that source of innovation for me. I can't imagine working without them."
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Boom Theory Spacemuffins Bop Deluxe Electronic Kit

Bridging The Gap

by Rick Long

Boom Theory may not enjoy the name recognition that the major electronic drumkit manufacturers do. But you can be sure that those manufacturers know about Boom Theory and their unique Spacemuffins design. The company, founded in the late 1980s by Al Adinolfi, is a pioneer in the creation of electronic drums that look and play similarly to acoustic kits. Today, each kit is custom-manufactured with trigger output characteristics matched to the input of the customer's sound module.

KEY NOTES

- Electronic-kit consistency with acoustic-kit feel
- Custom-designed to each order
- Maintains appearance of "real drums"

Al Adinolfi explains the Spacemuffins concept by pointing out, "Drummers who play rubber-pad or mesh-head electronic kits have a lot of problems when they try to switch back to acoustic drums. The feel is totally different. Their playing suffers from this difference, due to the motor memory of their muscles. I make electronic drums with the acoustic-drums feel that a drummer is used to, so he or she can switch back and forth between electronic and acoustic kits without problems."

Construction Details

For this review we were sent a Spacemuffins Bop Deluxe model with a wrapped finish in a tricolor pattern of red, silver, and blue glass-filled glitter. The set included a $3^1/_2$x13 dual-zone, chrome steel snare, 8x10 and 8x12 rack toms, a 14x14 free-standing floor tom, and a 14x18 bass drum. The kit is intended to be used with the customer's choice of sound module and cymbals.

The shells are hand-made from laminated birch/mahogany with a poplar fill. Batter heads are Remo coated Ambassadors. Resonant heads—which, in the case of Spacemuffins, are best referred to as "bottom heads" since they really don't resonate—are Remo Ebony Ambassadors. (The reason the bottom heads don't resonate will be explained later.)

The low-mass, springless aluminum lugs used on the kit are designed and manufactured in-house at Boom Theory. Rims, tension rods, and mounting hardware are purchased from overseas

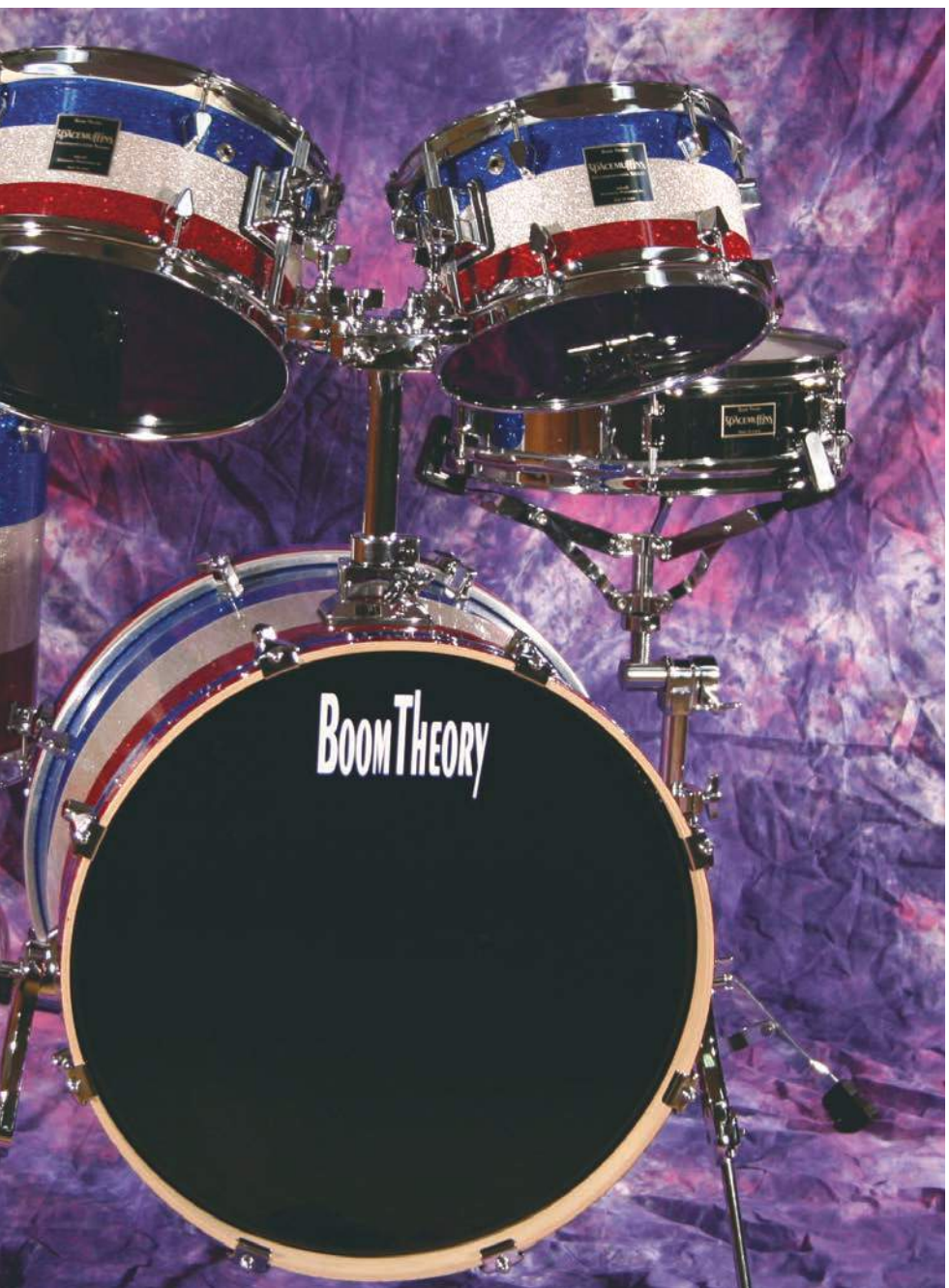
to help reduce overall cost. Adinolfi explains, "I purchase them from whatever source has the best deal at the time. The quality is always good, and the savings to customers is considerable compared to what it would cost if I manufactured them myself." According to Adinolfi, the tom-mounting hardware on our review kit is from a design by Ray Ayotte that is manufactured by Taye.

Triggering

The most important issue for all electronic drums is triggering. The drum must track the stick's articulation with finesse, whether the drum is a snare with a tight batter head or a floor tom with loose tensioning.

After experimenting with several ideas, Al Adinolfi found that imbedding the trigger in dense aircraft-grade polyurethane foam that partially fills the inside of each shell was the key. This system is referred to as the Digital Trap Set Baffling System (Digi-Trap system for short). The design involves a round wooden "bridge" that sits under a layer of the polyurethane foam, followed by more foam where the trigger is imbedded, and another bridge that's glued to the shell to hold everything in place within the drumshell. In the case of the snare drum, the bottom head takes the place of the second bridge. The beauty of this system is that it virtually eliminates false triggering.

When acoustic drums are played on live gigs with loud stage volume, the sound waves of the other instruments cause sympathetic vibration in the drumheads. An example of this occurs when the bass player in the band hits a note that causes your snare head to rattle loudly. Another example of sympathetic vibration comes from having your toms and cymbals mounted on the bass drum or on a rack system. When you play the bass drum, you "rattle" the mounted toms and cymbals slightly. The same thing occurs when you play toms on a rack system. Hitting one tom can send vibrations to the next one over, and so on down the line.



Sympathetic vibration usually isn't a problem with acoustic drums, because the vibration isn't enough to produce a disturbing sound from the drums or cymbals. But with electronic drums (or electronic triggers mounted on acoustic drums), this type of vibration is enough to cause the trigger to output an electrical signal and fool the sound module into thinking you've hit the drum. To remedy this on most electronic kits, you have to increase the rejection settings of the module to the point that dynamic range is severely reduced (as is the sensitivity of the pad or triggered drum).

The Digi-Trap system prevents sympathetic vibration, thus allowing you to adjust your sound module to the most sensitive settings possible. This increases the dynamic range and sensitivity of the drum back to the levels you experience when playing acoustic drums.

While this makes a significant difference in tom settings and playability, it's *most* noticeable in the snare drum and bass drum. All the nuances that come from ghost notes or rolls on the snare and feathering of the bass drum are possible, due to the Digi-Trap system.

The Spacemuffins snare has dual-zone triggering, with separate output jacks for the batter head and the rim. A piezo trigger glued to the inside of the shell handles rim triggering quite well; there were no problems with missed rimshots. And—as on all of the drums—the triggering on the snare batter head was sensitive, and it tracked quite well.

The Look'll Fool Ya

From the outside, Spacemuffin kits look just like acoustic drums. This isn't too surprising, because Boom Theory also makes acoustic drums. But it does beg the question: Can Spacemuffins be used as acoustic

Spacemuffins have their triggers sandwiched between two internal plywood "bridges," which are cushioned by special foam layers.

drums if the electronics are removed?

Frankly, no. Though the shells are of good quality, they're manufactured with no bearing edges on their bottoms. The Digi-Trap system relies on the batter head for all input, so the bottom head is basically there just for show. Also, the snare has no strainer, so it would be difficult to convert it for acoustic use. But the "realistic" look of the Spacemuffins kit goes a long way toward bridging the aesthetic gap between acoustic and electronic kits that still bothers some drummers (and some bandleader/employers).

Roadworthiness

Considering the brief testing period involved with a product review, the reviewer can really only speculate on how roadworthy an item will be over the long haul. But when it comes to the Spacemuffins' durability, I got input from someone who can speak from experience: Darren Costin, drummer for Björk and Wang Chung.

No stranger to electronic kits (he played a Simmons SDS5 through the '80s), Darren has been using Spacemuffins on tour for the past year, in conjunction with a Roland TD-20 brain. He refers to the kit as "bulletproof," adding, "This baby has grown up on the road and performed way beyond expectations for me."

That's a pretty solid testimonial.

Where To Look

Boom Theory is a "direct order only" company, so you won't see their kits at your local music retail outlet. Each kit is individually manufactured to the customer's stipulations for drum size and finish, with the output electronics matched to the specific sound module that will be used with the kit. The Boom Theory Web site contains design information on Spacemuffins electronic (and acoustic) kits, as well as basic pricing and ordering instructions.

"Hybrid" cars seem to be the newest thing from the auto industry. But Boom Theory has been offering "hybrid" electronic drumkits for years. For the drummer who prefers the consistent sound of electronics, but misses the look and feel of an acoustic kit, Spacemuffins offer the best of both worlds.

THE NUMBERS

For a five-piece Bop Deluxe kit with PVC wrap and all chrome hardware, prices start at $1,650. Since each kit is individually built to the specifications of the customer, prices vary with finish selection and other options.

Sparkle finishes, powder-coated lugs and hardware, and bass drum–mounted tom hardware all come at additional cost. An internal wiring option is also available that includes a custom snake with up to ten pins. Spacemuffins carry an unconditional one-year warranty.

(253) 813-2666, www.boomtheory.com.

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Photo courtesy of Mike Baird

Kenny Aronoff
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Band

Rob Bourdon
Linkin Park

Gorden Campbell
George Duke,
Jessica Simpson

Teddy Campbell
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Josh Freese
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REMO

PASSION. PLAY.

>TAYLOR HAWKINS

>FOO FIGHTERS' SKIN WALLOPER COMES OUT SWINGING

>STORY BY KEN MICALLEF
PHOTOS BY ALEX SOLCA

Taylor Hawkins is everybody's best bro'. He's a perpetually chilled out dude who thankfully is without the glamour-puss personal baggage that accompanies most rockers of his exalted, million selling-album position. A warm, generous, and surprisingly self-deprecating musician, Hawkins' mellow demeanor masks his extroverted and increasingly overheated drumming style.

And for lo these many years, first as a member of Alanis Morissette's band and currently with The Foo Fighters, Hawkins has harbored a deep dark secret. We're not talking about his ongoing battle with stage fright, his love of obscure Fleetwood Mac albums, or his obsession with Queen singer Freddie Mercury (whose velvet portrait adorns one wall in Hawkins' home). What the world at large doesn't know about Taylor Hawkins is that not only is he a frenetic, kinetic drummer, but this Topanga Canyon resident is one of the best unsung songwriters in Southern California.

Zildjian

Perhaps the skinniest drummer in showbiz, with an immense set of gleaming molars that is only matched by the ever flashing choppers of head Foo Fighter Dave Grohl, Hawkins lets it all hang out on his first solo album, *Taylor Hawkins & The Coattail Riders*. Matching a rhythmic sensibility that recalls Michael Shrieve-era Santana—as well as Phil Collins with Brand X and vintage Stewart Copeland—with low-slung folk pop wonders like The Eagles, Crosby, Stills & Nash, and Jackson Browne (whew!), *Taylor Hawkins & The Coattail Riders* is both a prog rock feast and a folkie slacker fantasy.

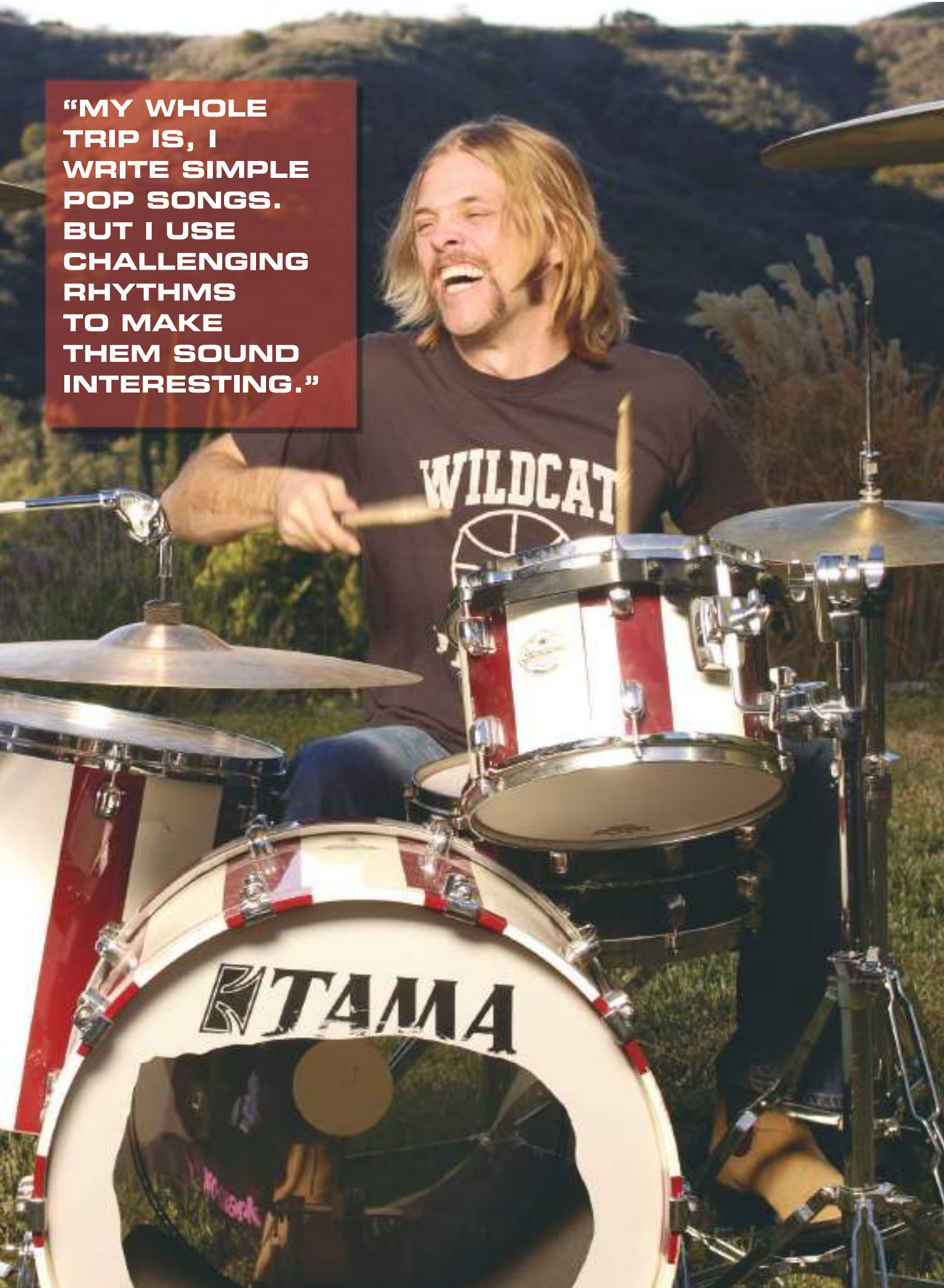
"I know some people will think the album sucks," Taylor offers, in trying to explain the album's diversity. "But it's the music I love. A lot of people do think it harkens back to the '70s. The Eagles is comfort-food music. I like vocal harmonies. I love Deep Purple. And I have to admit, I'm in a prog phase. I love early Genesis, like *Trick Of The Tail* and *Seconds Out,* with Phil Collins, Chester Thompson, and Bill Bruford on drums. Actually *Seconds Out* is one of my drum bibles. It's one of my favorite-*sounding* drum records too."

Ask Taylor for an inch and he'll give you a mile. That's just part of this drummer's big-hearted nature. "I was into Yes's *Relayer*," he continues, "*Tales From Topographic Oceans*, *Fragile*, and *Close To The Edge*, too. And of course, Neil Young, Zeppelin, and The Beatles. I also like Dennis Wilson's songs on the Beach Boys albums *Friends*, *Surf's Up*, and *20/20*, and his record *Pacific Ocean Blue.* And Fleetwood Mac's *Bare Trees* and *Future Games* are, for lack of a better word, so stony. I don't smoke pot and I don't endorse it, but those tunes do have that nice soft '70s sound."

"A nice soft '70s sound" smashed into shape by 6/4 and 7/4 meters in arrangements that give the manic prog of The Mars Volta a run for its money, Hawkins' debut also reveals a novel side of his drumming. Sure, his work on now-classic Foo Fighters albums like *There Is Nothing Left To Lose, One By One*, and the recent *In Your Honor* show Taylor's wild-armed, wide-eyed drumming in all its majesty. The Foo Fighters' recent live DVD, *Everywhere But Home*, reveals Taylor in non-stop motion, his arms flapping like wings as he slams the drums like a true force of nature. It's simply impossible to imagine any other drummer in The Foo Fighters. And while the band shares one of the world's great drummers in Dave Grohl, frankly, Hawkins plays things that Dave just couldn't muster, beginning with a standard press roll.

Coattail Riders, Hawkins' band that features bassist Chris Chaney and guitarist Gannon, enables the drummer to give full expression to the prog and Latin rock symphonies that have filled his head for years. Like throwing Stewart Copeland, Aynsley Dunbar, and Jon Theodore samples into a '70s soft-rock cocktail, Taylor Hawkins' debut signals the arrival of a drummer that we all *thought* we knew.

Find a seat—or a water bed—and tighten your safety belt: The Coattail Riders are about to launch into super stellar space.


"MY WHOLE TRIP IS, I WRITE SIMPLE POP SONGS. BUT I USE CHALLENGING RHYTHMS TO MAKE THEM SOUND INTERESTING."
WILDCAT
TAMA

MD: You've been known to keep many drumsets at your home in Topanga Canyon, but what set did you use for *The Coattail Riders* record?

Taylor: I used a mixed four-piece of a bunch of different kinds of drums, though I endorse Tama Starclassic. But we started this record almost unintentionally. We were just messing around, doing demos. I did three or four songs in about three days and then realized we were making a record. It may not sound perfect—it's not Steely Dan and it may not sound like The Foo Fighters—but it's a fun little record.

I was having so much fun, feeling so creative, and I felt like we were getting such good results on the songs that I didn't really think about what drums I was using. There was a drumset in the studio and I just played it.

MD: Some of the arrangements are very complex. Did Pro Tools editing software aid in their construction?

Taylor: The songs are, for the most part, one drum take all the way through. I might have dropped in a beat here or there if I made a mistake. The way we tracked is, I would show up to my friend's studio at nine in the morning, and I would find a tempo for a song I might have in my head. I would pick up a guitar and do a scratch track so I could follow something while I was playing drums. And then I would just sit in the drum room and play the drums to my awful guitar track just to get the arrangement. Then we might edit here and there, perhaps move a bridge around.

For instance, we did edit "Walking Away." It starts with a busy intro, which is also in the middle of the song. When we first tracked that song, it didn't have that at the beginning. It was just straight chords. I remember thinking, I wish I had started the tune with that more insane part. So we just moved that to the front of the song.

"Running In Place," the really long song that has all the changes in it, was a bitch. We set the click for each section and Pro Tooled the clicks together. Then I did a trash guitar track and then played a drum track to it. We almost got that in one take. I would just have to think about what the click was doing when I got to a certain part.

>HAWKINS' KIT

Drums: Tama Starclassic Performer in chrome finish (not shown in photos)

A. 6½x14 brass snare
B. 9x13 rack tom
C. 16x18 floor tom
D. 14" Remo RotoTom
E. 14x20 gong drum
F. 18x24 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

1. 15" A New Beat hi-hats
2. 20" A ride (prototype, used as crash)
3. 21" A Sweet ride
4. 21" A ride (prototype, used as crash)
5. 20" Oriental China Trash

Percussion: LP

aa. Jamblock (red, low-pitched)

Hardware: Tama Iron Cobra hi-hat stand and Power Glide bass drum pedal, DW cymbal and tom stands, Roc-N-Soc throne, Grip Peddler pads (on pedals)

Heads: Remo coated Emperor X on snare batter with Ambassador snare-side, clear Emperors on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors on bottoms, clear Emperor on RotoTom, PowerStroke 4 on gong drum, clear PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter with PowerStroke 3 smooth white on front

Sticks: Zildjian Taylor Hawkins signature model, Ahead stick wrap

Microphones (live setup): two Sennheisers for overheads (various models); Sennheiser 91 inside bass drum, Sennheiser 52 in air hole; Sennheiser 57A on top of snare, Sennheiser 57B underneath; Sennheiser 91s mounted inside toms

Tuning Taylor

"I tune Taylor's bottom tom heads a little tighter than the tops," says Hawkins drum tech Yeti Ward. "Taylor is a '70s freak, so I try to give him a cross between the sound of John Bonham and early Stewart Copeland. By tuning the bottom head tighter than the top, it gives the drum more resonance. The toms are really live-sounding.

"Taylor likes his snare drum tuned medium, not too tight," Ward continues. "He doesn't like that poppy sound. Taylor also likes his snare wires pretty loose. He likes to hear them rattle.

"As for his other drums, Taylor has me tune the RotoTom pretty high. But he likes a good, low-end thump from the bass drum. One soundman didn't like the bass drum tuned so low because it made him work too hard. So we added a little padding."

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TAYLOR HAWKINS
ARTIST SERIES STICK

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MD: The track "Louise" is like hyper-fast, steroid-filled Santana. What is the basic pattern?

Taylor: The pattern is in six. I kind of ripped it off from Genesis's "Wot Gorilla?" from their *Wind & Wuthering* record. I wrote the song on the guitar and didn't think about the groove. Then I was listening to that Genesis record. I loved the way Phil Collins' groove is so hyper there. I was also into Mahavishnu Orchestra and Tony Williams' Lifetime at the time. My whole trip is, I write simple pop songs. But I use challenging rhythms to make them sound interesting. I want every song to have a different rhythm. I make sure that each one has a signature of its own.

MD: "Running In Place" opens like an acoustic Led Zeppelin track, goes into a twangy Youngbloods guitar section, and then into an uptempo Latin prog part. Is there more than one meter there?

Taylor: It's in seven. That's the tune where we set all the tempos on the click track and Pro Tooled them together.

MD: It sounds like you're playing a demented pattern in the segue after "Running In Place."

Taylor: I'd been listening to Miles Davis's *Bitches Brew* one morning before pulling into the studio. I liked the trumpets on that album, the way they echo. That was the inspiration for that section. Gannon and I had this rolling groove, which I played with Blastix. It was just a little thing that we put down that I thought would make a good segue into "It's OK Now."

MD: "Get Up I Want To Get Down" reminds me of 7/4 punk Frank Zappa.

Taylor: Dave thought it sounded like Devo meets Led Zeppelin. It reminds *me* of a Roger Taylor song called "More Of That Jazz," from Queen's *Jazz* record. It almost gets disco there for a second. And the title is a play on silliness, but it's also a phrase, one of the working titles for the last Foo Fighters album.

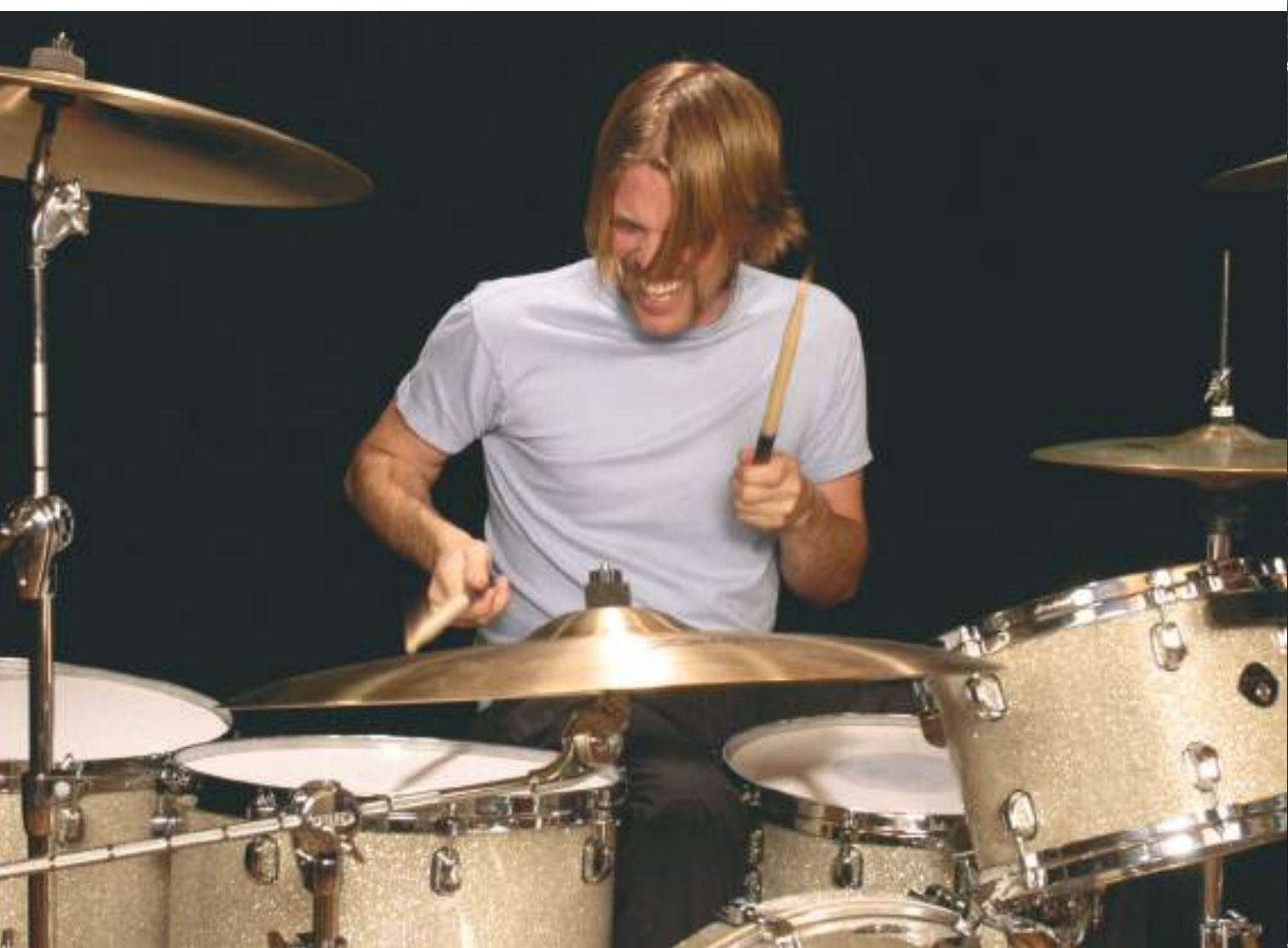
Dave was living with us here in Topanga at the time, and everyone was going through some stuff. Dave is a real caretaker. He's always making sure everybody is okay. He just really loves taking care of people he loves. And at that time we were all going through these crazy personal changes. And I said to him, "Sometimes, Dave, you've got to let somebody take care of you. You've got to get down every once in a while." So the working title for the record was *Get Up I Want To Get Down*. I thought it sounded snappy.

MD: When you're playing what I think of as Latin prog fills, are you thinking of Stewart Copeland or Neil Peart?

Taylor: Yes. And Buddy Rich, I wish! Billy Cobham, Neil Peart, Phil Collins, Roger Taylor—I rip off all of them. It's a big garage sale to me. My whole record collection is a garage sale of drum licks.

MD: On one hand this is a pop album with great songs. But it's definitely a drummer's album as well.

Taylor: I made a conscious effort to make sure that the rhythms were interesting. My songs tend to be very similar. Why not make it an interesting rhythmic record? There isn't a lot of 4/4 on the album. Most of it is in six, even though I tend to play four over six a lot.



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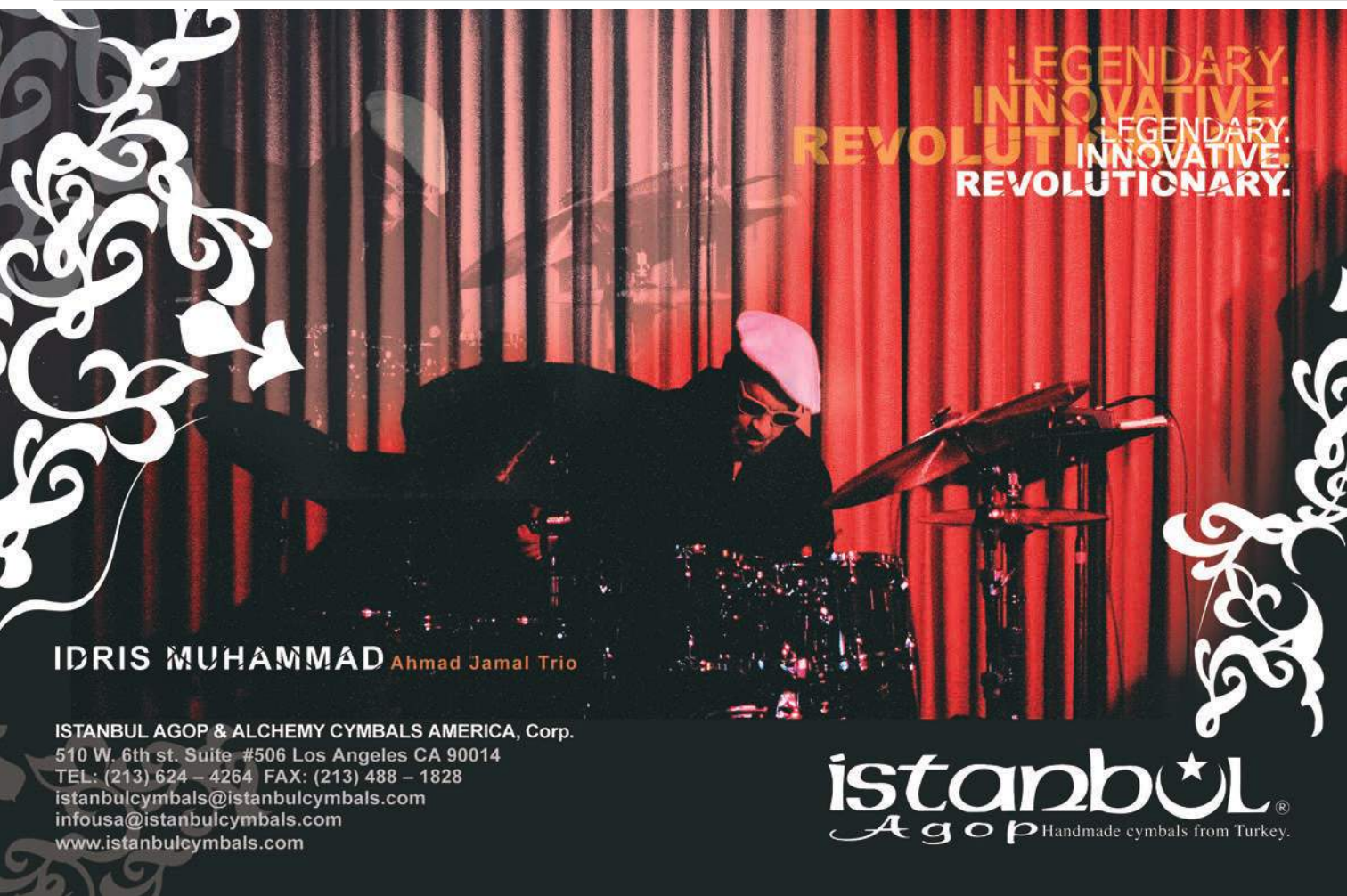
Taylor Hawkins

MD: And your drumming flows so well. It's also very pointed in a way. There's a real edge to your playing.

Taylor: I am definitely an on-top player. If you put my drums up on a Pro Tools grid, every single beat is one millisecond faster than the click. It's the nature of my personality. I tend to think that personality comes through in drumming and in music. Someone who is relaxed will be a laid-back drummer. But then, look at Dave. He's a spazz like me, but he has a great, laid-back feel when he drums.

MD: You have said in the past that it was hard for you to get used to playing with a click. I guess you're comfortable with one now.

Taylor: I don't consider myself to be Steve Gadd—I don't have the best time. I tend to speed up, and if I think about it too much I'll slow down to compensate. I don't worry about it live, because we go for energy live. But in the studio I use the click as a crutch. I don't like recording without one. Only one track on *In Your Honor* didn't have a click, and that was "Hell." Dave and I did it live in the studio. I think it's fine, but it speeds up like crazy.



MD: You play full-out most of the time. How do you maintain your stamina?

Taylor: I just drink a lot of water. After a couple of shows in a row, my stamina is up and I can play that way without a problem. But I can't skip a month of playing and just get up on stage and play that way. You have to work up to it.

I lead a pretty healthy lifestyle. I eat well and I drink a lot of water. And I do pushups every day to build my upper-body strength.

MD: Do you use a true matched grip, with palms down, facing the snare drum?

Taylor: Yes, my palms always face down. I used to go see Stephen Perkins with Jane's Addiction. He's a big influence. I was so enamored of his approach and how interesting he looked while he played. Tommy Lee, too, is a big influence. He has one of the greatest rock feels of all time. Listen to "Shout At The Devil."

MD: How has your drumming changed since *There Is Nothing Left To Lose*?

Taylor: One thing I put an emphasis on live now is really trying to be as solid timewise as I can be. I feel like my time has gotten a lot better. The band was out of control when I joined. There wasn't much emphasis on getting a live show together. They just bashed out the songs. When I joined, we started working on perfecting our show, working on segues, jams, and sticking songs together. And I have really worked on my time. It's something I have to think about.

MD: On The Foo Fighters' *Everywhere But Home* DVD, you play a solo in "Low" that is short but extremely powerful.

Taylor: I also do a little bit of a drum solo, which started as a joke, in "Stacked Actors," from *There Is Nothing Left To Lose*. Dave used to go out in the audience a lot during that song. He doesn't do it anymore because the audience was so excited that he almost got his ass kicked. I started doing a drum solo so he could get back to the stage in time. The solo kept growing and growing, and Dave would come back and we would swap licks. Then I did a really long solo, and Dave insisted that I keep doing it. So it's grown. It has a basic form.

MD: What is the form of your solo?

Taylor: I tend to start on the snare, but I usually turn the snares off for a timbale effect. I start with that, work my way over to the toms, then work on the RotoTom a little bit. Then sometimes I'll stop in the middle of the solo and do the crowd-pleaser triplets. People like that, though it's kind of a dumb-dumb drum solo trick.

MD: Are you playing a lot of singles?

Taylor: Yeah, I pretty much only use single strokes. I was watching a Neil Peart DVD recently, and what got me was how powerful his single-stroke rolls are. He can pull them out of nowhere. I've also been watching *Synchronicity Live In Atlanta* on DVD. Man, Copeland was so at the top of his game. He is ridiculous, and his rolls were so strong.

MD: You were born February 17, 1972 in Dallas. Were your parents musical?

Taylor: My parents weren't musical. My dad had a business called Brohme Motor Homes. You can still see them going up and down the highway. My mom was a housewife.

MD: When did you start playing drums?

Taylor: When I was ten. I had a neighbor, Kent Cleater, who played drums and piano. I wanted to do something with music. It hit me emotionally from a young age. I wasn't good at sports or anything. One day Kent sat me down at his drums and had me play a four-on-the-floor rock beat, and it was really easy for me—as opposed to guitar or math. I took a few lessons, but I wish I'd been more studious. It would have made my life easier, especially when I first got

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>DAVE ON TAYLOR

"At first, it wasn't Taylor's drumming that attracted me to him," says Foo Fighters leader and Nirvana drum legend Dave Grohl. "He was just a fun guy to hang out with. The Foo Fighters had done a few shows with Alanis Morissette's band, and I watched Taylor play with her and was amazed at his energy. I watched him and thought, What is this guy doing playing with this band? He has way too much energy for this...soft rock. Taylor played more like a Stephen Perkins or a Stewart Copeland, not a pop drummer. So he and I started hanging out, and we just got to talking, drinking, and laughing, and we became friends. Eventually I got in touch with him when I seriously needed a drummer."

Hawkins In Overdrive

"Taylor saved my ass," Grohl admits. "We were about to go on the road and our drummer bailed. There weren't too many people I imagined could play with the band. We jammed with Josh Freese, and it sounded great. But I just knew that Taylor was the type of *person* to be in our band, more than just the type of *drummer*.

"I remember stopping by Taylor's house before we even auditioned him. I had given him a tape of our new record at the time, *The Color And The Shape*. He said to me, 'I have a question about a drum part.' Taylor sat down and said, 'Does it go like this?' He proceeded to beat the crap out of his drums, and his snare was so loud I felt like I was at a firing range. He played for ten seconds, and it was great. I said, 'Uh, yeah, that's right.' I knew immediately that he was going to be the drummer for The Foo Fighters."

In Taylor's Honor

"When Taylor joined the band," Grohl admits, "we were just a mess. We were more of a sloppy punk rock bar band than a tight rock unit. We were out of control. We weren't too concerned with being tight. We just wanted to scream, jump around, and go nuts. But since then we've reined it in and found a balance between losing our minds onstage and making it sound tight and powerful. Taylor's drumming has gone from being the craziest Stewart Copeland 'tempo rise' to really solid. He has good time and he's very concerned about being solid. I think he's made a conscious effort to control the fire that he has inside."

Paul La Raia

Rocket In The Pocket

"Taylor's greatest strength is his live performance—his power and passion," Grohl asserts. "Having him behind me every night makes me feel safe, like I've got this rocket strapped to my back that is going to go no matter what. Taylor takes two or three drum solos every show. And not only is he something to watch, he elaborates on his drum parts, taking things in different places."

Why Opposites Attract

"We were pretty much opposites as drummers," Grohl says. "I'm a minimalist. I try to find the basic, core bass drum groove of every song I play. And I can go a whole song without playing a fill. I might do a flam or two, but I bring it back to the basic 'Phil Rudd school of drumming.' But Taylor has so much crazy power and passion that he can't wait to thrash it out. He might do something in the studio that seems simple. But once he's onstage, who *knows* what's going to happen. It might be *Live At Leeds*! You never know with Taylor."

•

into the studio.

MD: Did you play with bands in school?

Taylor: Yeah, I played in cover bands and funny make-up bands with my friends. I had all the Police and Genesis tapes in the garage and I played along to Stewart Copeland and Phil Collins—I *tried* to, anyway. Thankfully, I could pick things up pretty easily on drums. I thought I was hot stuff when I was thirteen!

MD: Were you?

Taylor: Well, I thought so! Maybe I was for a kid. I was a natural drummer, for sure. But I see these younger guys now, like Tony Royster Jr., and I'm knocked out.

MD: Your first professional gig was with singer Sass Jordan?

Taylor: Yes. They gave me five hundred bucks a week to go on the road. This was back in 1994. I had been working in a music store, and a guy there knew her, so I auditioned. I figured it was my only chance to go on the road.

I knew that this was a tough business. I figured that my future would involve managing a music store and playing in cover bands on the side. Then, through Sass Jordan, I met Alanis Morissette's manager, who asked me to go on tour with her. That worked out. A couple of months after I joined, her career took off like crazy.

MD: What did that feel like, that instant super stardom?

Taylor: I was just part of her band. But to be in a world like that, all of a sudden, and when you're twenty-four, is exciting. I was getting good money and seeing the world.

MD: It wasn't scary as well? I understand you suffer from stage fright.

Taylor: I still do; it's awful. There are nights when I don't feel comfortable. It's like I'm fighting the whole night. Thankfully, most of the time nobody can tell. I'll come off stage feeling awful and Dave will say, "I don't know what you're talking about. You sounded great." It's just because I don't feel comfortable. I love playing the drums and I play all of the time. But I do suffer serious stage fright. Nothing helps: I warm up, take deep breaths. I just get up there and jump off the cliff.

MD: What was your audition for The Foo Fighters?

Taylor: Dave and I jammed on "Monkey Wrench" and maybe "Everlong." I had a drum room up in my house at the time, and Dave came over, we talked, and I played a little bit for him. We got along so well it was more about that than the drumming, at least in the beginning. He knew I could do it, but it really did take me a while to get comfortable playing Foo Fighters music. I had been doing a more groove-based thing with Alanis. In general with Dave, it's fast-tempo rock, and all of the songs are connected. We don't take a break.

MD: Let's talk about recording. Dave likes to use analog tape for the drums?

Taylor: We get the drum track on analog and then dump it into Pro Tools so we can put everything else on top of it. Dave likes that fat sound.

MD: Do you like to do multiple takes?

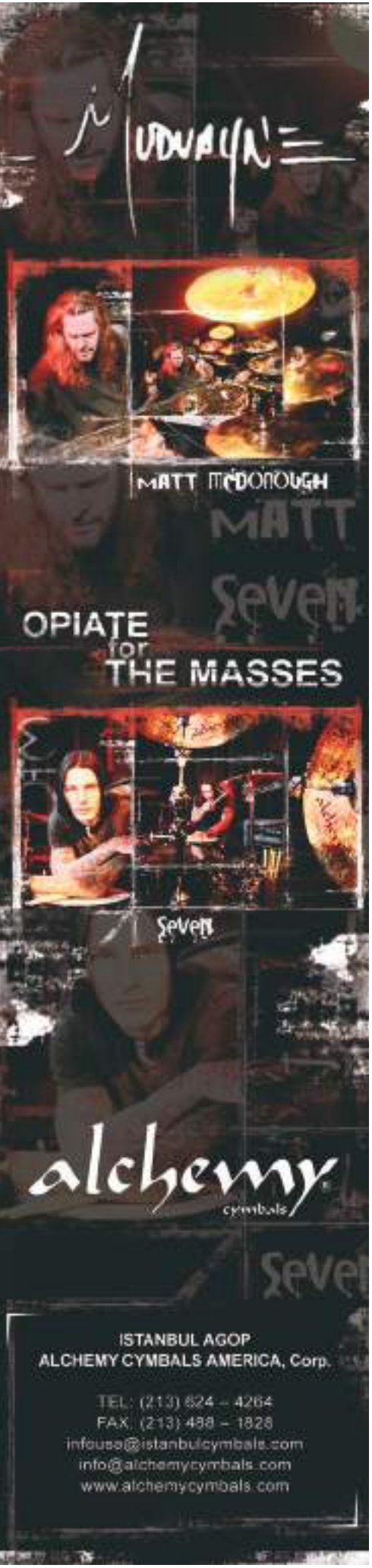
Taylor: I really don't like to spend time on too many takes on my own stuff. I have to do so many takes on The Foo Fighters records.

MD: Why is that?

Taylor: Dave is more of a perfectionist—not in the "hitting each drum perfectly" way, but in the way of, "Should you be playing the bell of the ride cymbal there, the hi-hat, or the crash-ride? Or maybe you should do a fill right there?" We really map out those drum tracks. On my record I didn't map out a damn thing.

MD: Your personality and feel really come through on *Taylor Hawkins & The Coattail*

"STAGE FRIGHT IS AWFUL. THERE ARE NIGHTS WHEN I DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE."



Taylor Hawkins

>TAYLOR TRACKS

>RECORDINGS

Artist	Album
Taylor Hawkins	Taylor Hawkins & The Coattail Riders
Foo Fighters	One By One
Foo Fighters	There Is Nothing Left To Lose
Foo Fighters	In Your Honor
Foo Fighters	Everywhere But Home (DVD)
Brian May	Another World

>FAVORITES

Artist	Album	Drummer
Genesis	Trick Of The Tail	Phil Collins
Genesis	Seconds Out	Chester Thompson, Phil Collins, Bill Bruford
Yes	Relayer	Alan White
Yes	Tales From Topographic Oceans	Alan White
Yes	Fragile	Bill Bruford
Yes	Close To The Edge	Bill Bruford
Dennis Wilson	Pacific Ocean Blue	Hal Blaine, Ricky Fataar, Bobby Figueroa, Dennis Wilson
The Police	Zenyatta Mondatta	Stewart Copeland
Queen	Live Killers	Roger Taylor
Mahavishnu Orchestra	Inner Mounting Flame	Billy Cobham
Rush	Exit Stage Left	Neil Peart

Riders. It makes it apparent that you and Dave are really opposite drummers in many ways. Maybe that's why the relationship works. You are loose and jazzy, like a young Michael Shrieve, and Dave is the ultimate headbanger.

Taylor: Right. He is very powerful. I always say that he's like Bonham and I'm like Stewart Copeland. I'm an on-top player and Dave is a behind-the-beat player. Dave is a solid 2 and 4, though I wouldn't say meat-and-potatoes, because he has serious skills. But he likes to play very simply for the most part. I tend to like to throw in a lot of off-beats.

MD: Do you and Dave work out your drum parts together?

Taylor: On *One By One*, he did a lot of demos at his house, drums and everything. He had the basic ideas for a lot of the songs. But thinking back to "All My Life," Dave and I put that together. He had the riff and we just built it. I turned the beat around in the middle section. And Dave had a lot of ideas of what he wanted on *In Your Honor*. So I would come in and try to mess it up as much as possible. [laughs]

MD: What about all of the single-stroke rolls in "In Your Honor"?

Taylor: Dave had that totally mapped out. He knew exactly what he wanted. It was just a matter of me playing what he wanted and putting my own flair on it.

The second song, "No Way Back," is one that came up out of nowhere, and we arranged that together. We stole that groove idea from "Stand Up And Shout" by Dio. Vinnie Appice is an amazing drummer. The bounce in his feel is great.

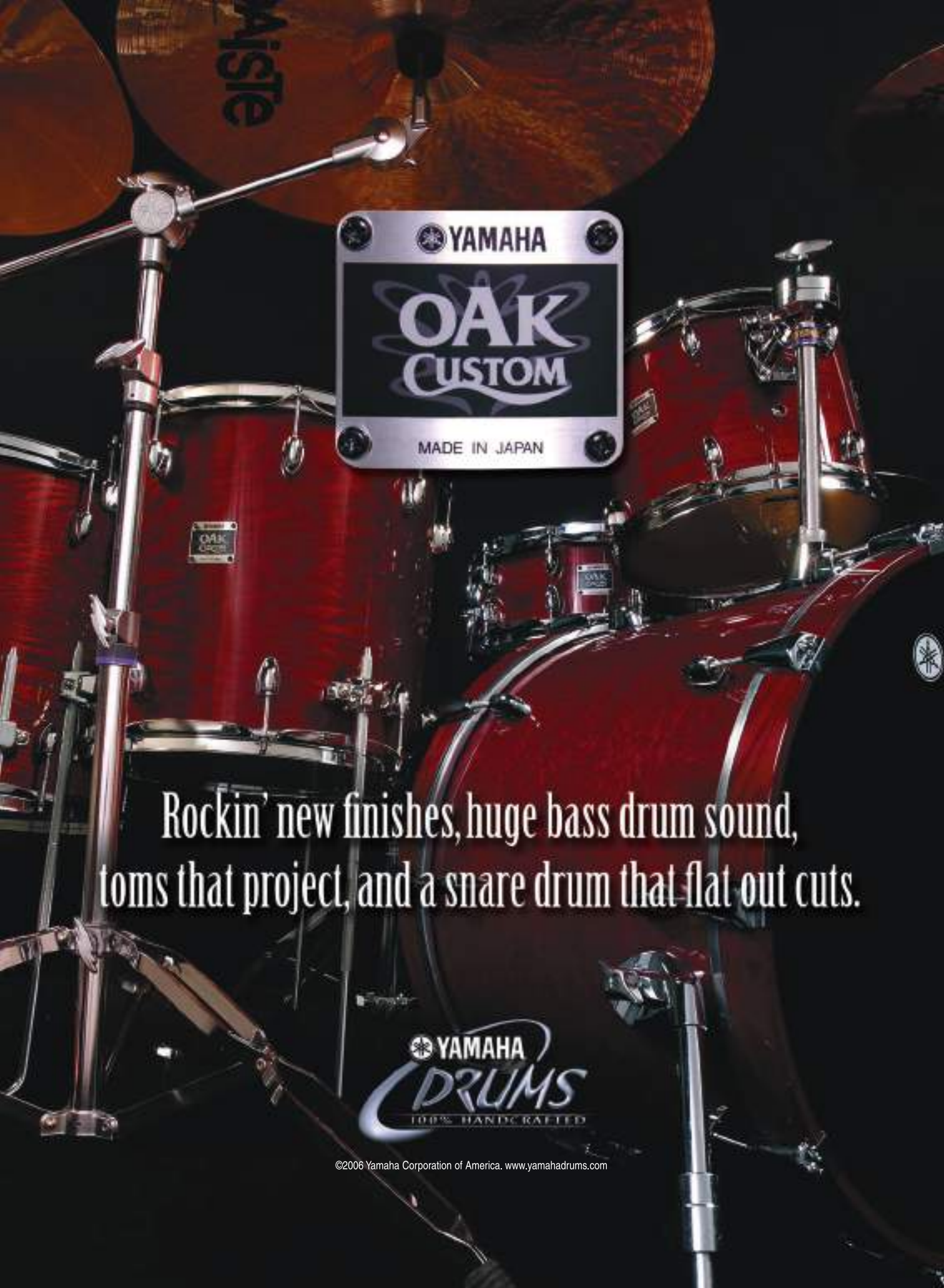
I'm also trying to stick in the little drum solos at the end of songs. At the end of "Best Of You," I get four bars to go nuts. And at the end of "No Way Back," I do a tight little drum thing. There's an acoustic side to this record as well, and "Cold Day In The Sun" is mine. Dave plays drums on it and I'm singing.

MD: What's the most demanding Foo Fighters song for you to play?

Taylor: "In Your Honor" is a demanding song. "Everlong" is really demanding, too, with all the fast 16ths on the hi-hat. I'd say *all* of the songs are demanding to a certain degree. I want the feel to be right on all of them.

MD: It does seem odd that you and Dave think of time in such a different way.

Taylor: Speaking of that, we were on tour recently with Oasis, and Zak Starkey was playing drums for them. He has such a great feel. And Dave kept going on, "Oh, he is so great. I just love him. I love watching that guy play drums. He's one of my favorites. He is so behind the beat." After Dave kept harping on how great Zak is, I said, "Well, damn dude, why did you pick *me* to play in



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Taylor Hawkins

your band? You picked the most on-top drummer in the world." "No, you don't understand," Dave said. "That's what The Foo Fighters need. The music has got to *drive*. It has to be on top. I like watching Zak for a whole other type of thing."

MD: But I would love to hear you on Zak Starkey's main gig, with The Who.

Taylor: Dude, I would give *anything* to play with The Who. You just tell Pete [Townshend] that I want to do it. [laughs] I'm just sloppy enough to be the right guy for the gig! But there was definitely a method to Mr. Moon's madness. He was a huge influence on my drumming, too.

MD: What does the name of your band, The Coattail Riders, actually mean?

Taylor: I have a good friend, Tim Clahussey, who introduced me to my wife. He was always backstage at our gigs stealing beer, and he would say, "Coattail Ridin'." I just liked the expression and thought it was funny. And, obviously, more people will hear about this record because I'm in The Foo Fighters than if I was Joe Blow from Wisconsin. So I'm kind of coattail riding too!

MD: What are the plans for The Coattail Riders? Will you tour as a trio?

Taylor: Oh, yeah. We're still working on covers to add to our set list. I will sing from the drums, but we'll also jam a lot. It really is about the music and stretching. It's not like the repertoire in my '70s cover band, Chevy Metal. In that band we try and do deeper cuts, not "Foxy Lady" and "Whole Lotta Love."

Here's Chevy Metal's set list: "Can't You Hear Me Knockin'" by The Rolling Stones, "Fairies Wear Boots" by Black Sabbath, "Chip Away At The Stone" by Aerosmith, "Jailbreak" by Thin Lizzy, "Highway Star" by Deep Purple, "Stranglehold" by Ted Nugent, "Young Lust" by Pink Floyd, "Shapes Of Things" by The Jeff Beck Group, and "Beer Drinkers And Hell Raisers" by ZZ Top.

MD: Sounds great. Where's your next Chevy Metal gig?

Taylor: We're playing the River Bottom Bar & Grill in Burbank. Bring your friends!

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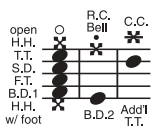
The Coattail Riders' Taylor Hawkins

by Ed Breckenfeld

MUSIC KEY

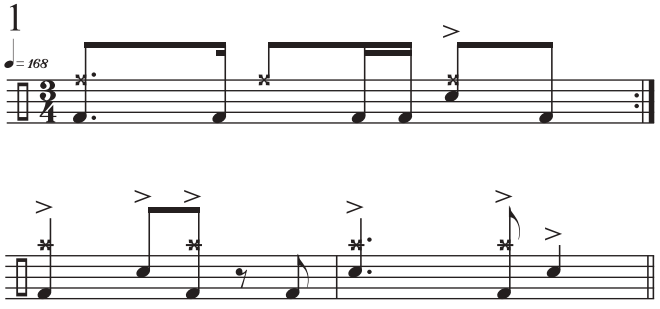


History repeats! Mirroring Dave Grohl's metamorphosis from Nirvana's drummer into the leader of The Foo Fighters, Foo's drummer Taylor Hawkins is singing and songwriting for his own group, The Coattail Riders. With a cool voice, catchy songs, and a great band, Taylor's multiple talents get a strong showcase on his debut release. But here we'll focus on his drumming, as the album's mixture of pop/rock melodies with prog/rock time signatures gives Mr. Hawkins a chance to stretch his groove creativity.

"Louise"

Taylor comes slammin' out of the box with this speedy 3/4 groove on the album's first track. Notice the two-over-three polyrhythm in the crash cymbal sequence. (0:10)

1



"Walking Away"

Here's a great intro lick, no doubt inspired by the drumming style of Taylor's buddy Grohl. The quick tempo makes this pattern impressive. (0:01)

2

"Running In Place"

"Running In Place" moves through various tempos and time signatures before exploding into this fast sequence in seven. Using his ride cymbal bell to accent the rhythm while strategically placing offbeats on his kick, snare, and hi-hat, Taylor crafts one of the best grooves on the album. (3:01)

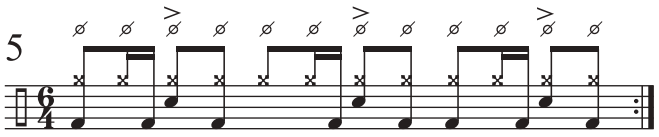
3

"Drive Me Insane"

We've seen the Stewart Copeland influence in Hawkins' playing before. (Check out the June 2003 *Off The Record* on The Foo Fighters' *One By One* album.) Here's a key example from this disc. You can hear a bit of Copeland in the smooth flow of the drumbeat, the choice of fills, and the use of the ride cymbal bell. (1:36)

4

The ending groove is also a good one, adding energy without sacrificing the smoothness of the rhythm track. (3:06)



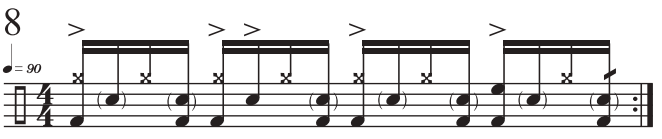
"Get Up I Want To Get Down"

Taylor has a knack for coming up with great grooves in seven. Here's one that works off of the guitar riff from this quirky track. (0:16)

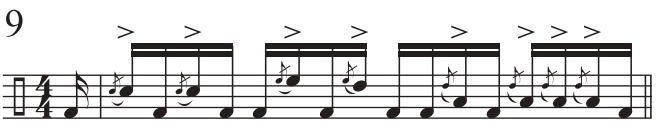
Hawkins' talent for designing exciting drum breaks is also evident throughout the album. This one follows a paradiddle drumbeat section and fills a seven-beat space. The accents play a crucial role in this dynamic fill. (2:17)

"Better You Than Me"

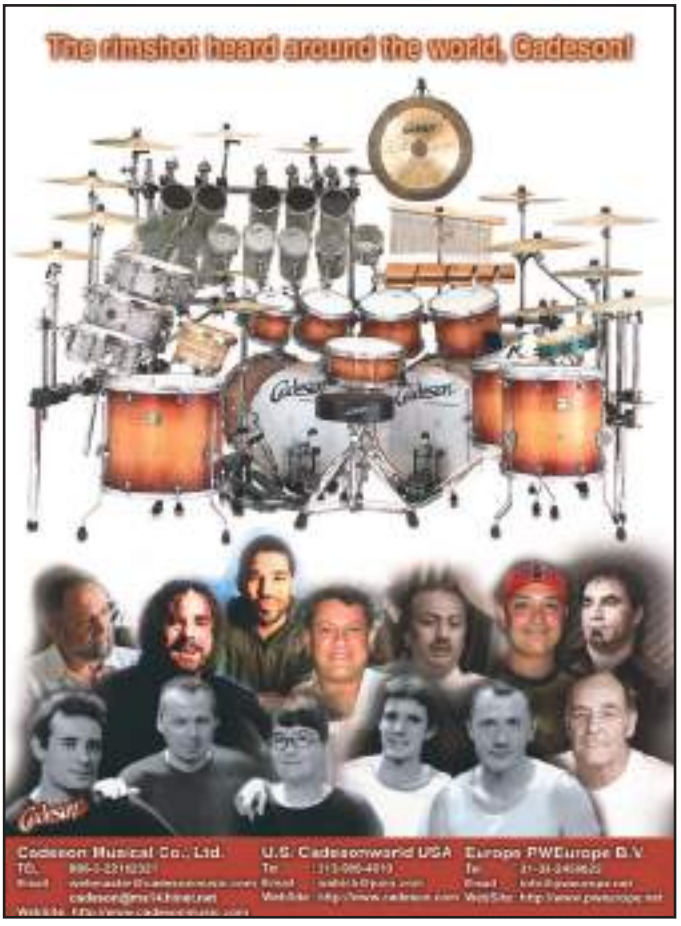
This track contains an interesting groove that has a half-time samba feel. The ghost notes and bass drum part provide a subtle 16th-note push under the snare and tom accents. (0:05)



Flams and kick drum sequences are a proven combination in rock fills. Here Taylor employs them with a unique sense of style that jumps out at you. (2:05)



You can contact Ed Breckenfeld through his Web site, www.edbreckenfeld.com.



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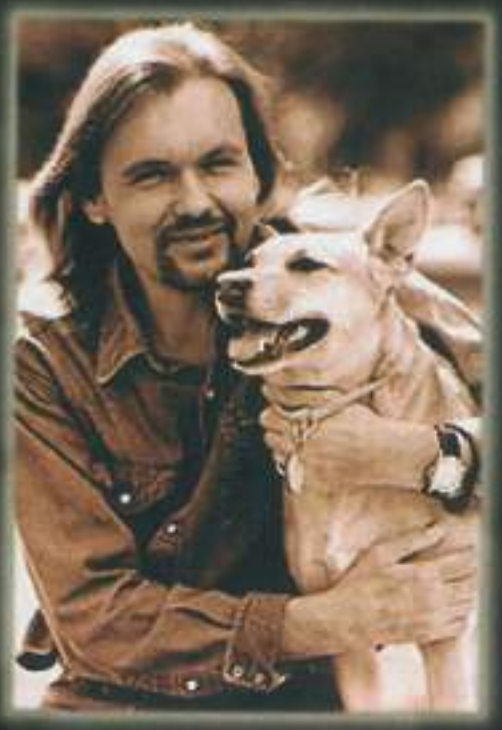


A Tribute To MARK CRANEY

by Robyn Flans

Listen to Gino Vannelli's "Brother To Brother" from his *Live In New Orleans* album, and you'll immediately get a sense of who Mark Craney was. You'll witness his passion, his commitment, his fire, his sensitivity, his force, his sense of humor, his creativity, and his sheer love of music. You'll instinctively realize that these elements couldn't have simply been consciously developed in his playing. No, these traits had to have come from deep within Craney's soul.

What listening to that track *won't* reveal is the warrior that Mark was—the strength he had inside that came from living with major health disabilities most of his life and ultimately not being able to do the work he so loved. Craney possessed such a strong character, and even though he suffered greatly, he would not complain.

Mark was a South Dakota boy through and through. While he made a name for himself in Los Angeles, the town always seemed to boggle him a bit. And in fact, he moved his family back to South Dakota in 1980 after five years of LA life.

Mark began playing at age twelve, but he never had lessons. His dad, having played a little bit, set the drums up for a left-handed drummer. Mark, being right handed, incredibly, learned a left-handed approach and continued that way. His main influence growing up was Ginger Baker of Cream. "I loved his double kick drums and his loose approach," Mark told me in our *Modern Drummer* interview in the early '80s. Then it was Billy Cobham: "Billy is an idea dispenser," Mark said. Later it was David Garibaldi, Jack DeJohnette, and Tony Williams, all of whom you can hear in Mark's playing on such memorable recordings as Jean-Luc Ponty's *Imaginary Voyage* or *Civilized Evil*, not to mention Jethro Tull's *A* and his work on Gino Vannelli's classic, *Brother To Brother*.

Mark arrived in LA in 1975, and by early 1976 he had the gig with hot fusion violinists Jean-Luc Ponty, touring and recording. In late 1976 he joined Tommy Bolin; the following year he joined The Mark Almond Band. In '78 he toured with Caldera and Phyllis Hyman, and he recorded an album with Ray Barretto and Tito Puente. Later that year be began working with Vannelli.

Then, while working on a low-budget demo with Eddie Jobson—and in his words, "Groaning about it"—the unexpected happened. Jobson was called to play on Ian Anderson's solo record, and happened to have that low-budget demo in his pocket, which he played for Anderson. "I'm in LA with our savings dwindling," Mark recalled, "and I get the call to go to London. I was on my way the next day."

The Anderson solo album turned into the next Jethro Tull album, *A*, and Mark became part of the band for the next year. Listen to "Pine Marten's Jig" for Craney at his most creative. The drummer recalled at the time, "The song has a million twists to it. I don't know what time signature it's in. I'm fairly acquainted with odd meters, but these guys just learn it and say, 'Well, it kind of goes like this…,' and then you learn it the same way. They don't have any charts and they don't even know what time most of the stuff is in. It's kind of a soulful approach. I like it."

After Tull, there was more work with Gino Vannelli. Though his health issues began to slow him down, Mark went on to play with Tower Of Power and Eric Burdon. But destiny cut Mark's time at the drums short, and what a shame. If you listen to his work—especially with Vannelli and Tull—you'll wish there was more to hear.

We lost Mark this past November 28, after years of battling complications of diabetes. He was a unique human being with an unusual way of looking at life and music. Everyone talks about how Mark could look right into your soul, and this is true. Maybe it was his ill health that made him particularly sensitive to others, but you didn't have to say a lot to Mark. He lived life as he played music—intuitively, with all his heart and soul.

For an intimate portrait of Mark as a drummer and as a person, *MD* spoke to the great musicians he worked alongside during his all-to brief playing career.

ARTISTS ON CRANEY

The LA drumming community came together many times to help Mark Craney. This photo is from an event in the late '80s.

"I first heard Mark Craney play with Gino Vannelli, and my jaw dropped. Such speed, such precision, such power and excitement in his playing. And what a beautiful touch and sound. I was awed and humbled, yet because of that, I was also inspired to work harder on my own playing.

"Bob Dylan once said, 'The highest purpose of art is to inspire. What else can you do? What else can you do for anyone but inspire them?'

"Mark Craney inspired me."

Neil Peart

"'Brother To Brother' is one of the greatest drum tracks."

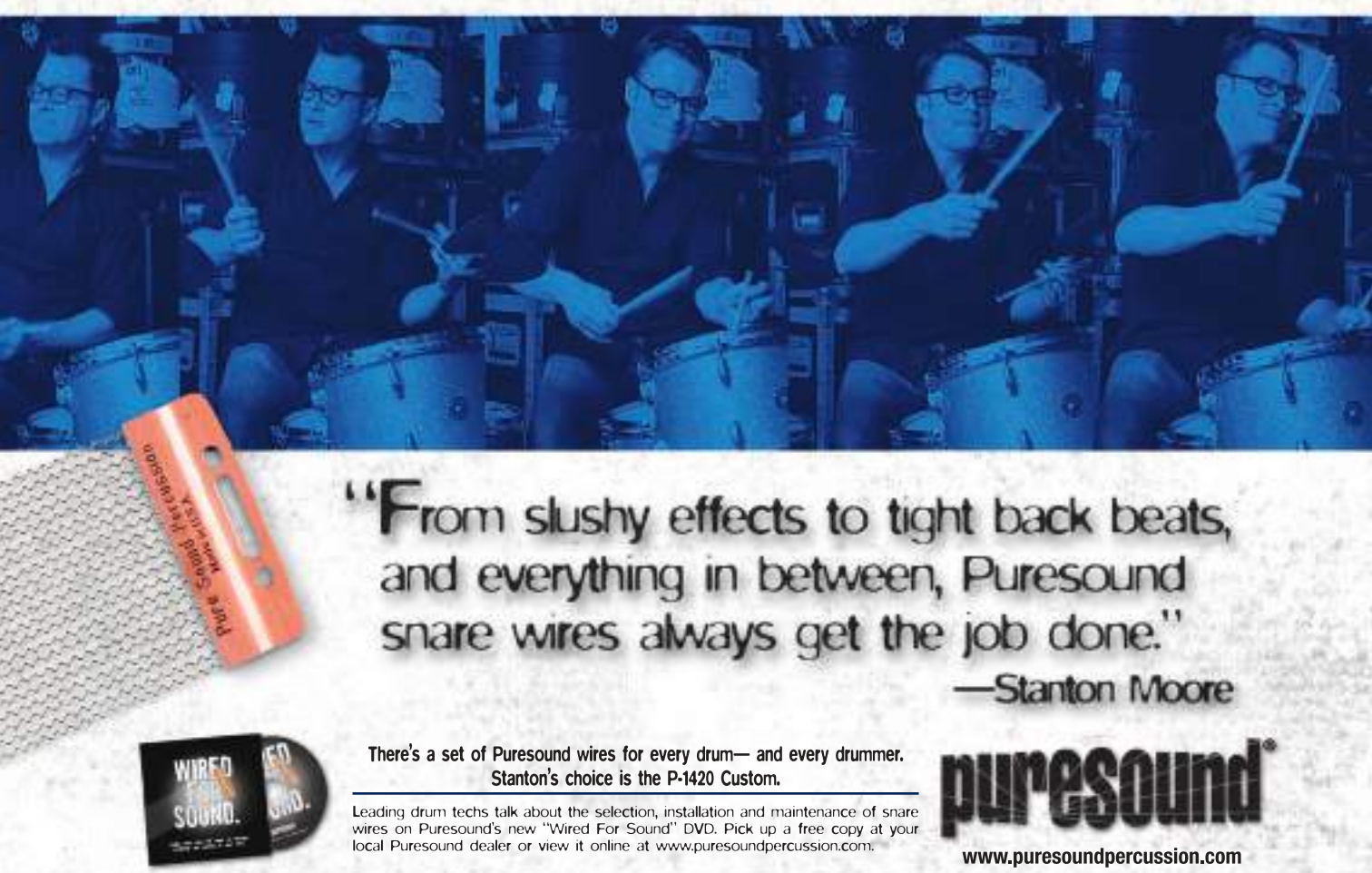
Phil Collins

"Mark Craney was not only one of my drum heroes, but also one of my best friends. I first met him in 1982, when I moved to Los Angeles.

"I had been a huge fan of Gino Vannelli's *Brother To Brother* album. Mark's playing on it was really fresh, like nothing I had ever heard before. Every track on that CD is filled with Mark's brilliance. He had the unique and natural ability to put incredibly exciting drum grooves and fills into songs without getting in the way of the vocals and the melody. He later told me—and I did not realize it before he told me—that he even snuck in some very musical double bass playing in Gino's huge hit ballad, 'The Wheels Of Life'!

"When I moved to Los Angeles in 1982, one of the first things I did was go to a club to hear Vinnie Colaiuta play, which is where I met Doane Perry. Doane told me that his friend Mark Craney had moved from South Dakota to LA. He gave me Mark's phone number, and the next day I called him and scheduled a drum lesson. One of the first things I asked him about was the fills on 'Brother To Brother.' Mark played them over and over for me and really slowed them down so I could learn them.

"Mark and I instantly became great pals, and a few months later he needed a roommate in the house he was renting, so I gladly rented one of the rooms. Mark's sense of humor was fantastic. He always had interesting twists on every situation. He was one of the best friends I ever had."



Gregg Bissonette

"To those who knew him, Mark Craney was so much more than a drummer, though he certainly did influence many other drummers with his innovative, fiery performances on records like Gino Vannelli's *Brother To Brother*.

"We were born just two days apart and both broke out of the Midwest to allow our careers and emotions to blossom. He was able to express his frustration and heartbreak over his physical problems without it becoming a 'look at poor pitiful me' conversation. He never showed one iota of jealousy that his drumming pals could go out there and play the gigs he couldn't, not to mention that he couldn't walk, run, or eat and drink what he wanted. I wonder what it feels like to have total facility on a drumset (and in life) and then have it all taken away. I suspect I wouldn't respond to that level of trauma as well as Mark did.

"The bottom line is, Mark's attributes are no doubt serving him well wherever he is now: pride, compassion, truthfulness, love, patience, forgiveness…and more."

Billy Ward

"Mark Craney played a very important role in my life. It was Mark's decision to leave Jean-Luc Ponty's gig to tour with Tommy Bolin that opened up an opportunity for me to join Jean-Luc's group. In October 1976, while a student at the Berklee College of Music, I got a call to come to New York City to audition for Ponty. I went to New York and Jean-Luc hired me. Two days later I was in LA rehearsing with the band. The tour was for the album *Imaginary Voyage*, which Mark had played drums on.

"As I learned the tunes from the album, Mark's creative and exciting drumming deeply impressed me. I hadn't heard of him before, since *Imaginary Voyage* was Mark's first major recording and it hadn't been released yet. I was amazed that an unknown drummer from Sioux Falls, South Dakota was playing world-class fusion drums! I wondered, 'Where did Jean-Luc find this guy?'

"Later, when I met Mark for the first time, I was struck by his dry wit and humility. I always enjoyed listening to his recordings, especially his incredible work with Gino Vannelli.

"Thank you, Mark, for affecting my life in a significant way. I miss you and will always be indebted to you."

Steve Smith

"Mark did not deserve to die so young. No one deserves to suffer as much as Mark did. I share the grief with his relatives and with those who were close to him till the end. We musicians lost a very talented member of our community.

"Our paths crossed a long time ago. I was auditioning drummers for the first band that I was putting together in Los Angeles in 1975. Although he was self-taught and competing with well-schooled drummers, his playing was so special, original, and sensitive that he got the gig. He fit in perfectly with the fusion style of my band at the time, but he also had a rare musical intuition.

"Once, during a rehearsal, we started jamming on a bebop tune for fun. Mark fit perfectly, so swinging and so modern. I was really surprised. I asked him, 'Have you been listening to Jack DeJohnette?' With big round eyes he replied, 'Who?' He had never played bebop before.

"We went on the road on an intensive touring schedule, and it was a joy to see him grow and blossom so fast musically. I was glad that my gamble on Mark paid off by the interest that other artists showed in his drumming later on. The recordings on which he

participated immortalize his talent and his passage on our planet Earth. May his soul rest in peace forever."

Jean-Luc Ponty

"Dear Mark, it would be silly and terribly flat of me to imagine I could compose a eulogy for you without you somehow getting the message from across the veil. So instead of talking behind your back, I will address this note to you personally.

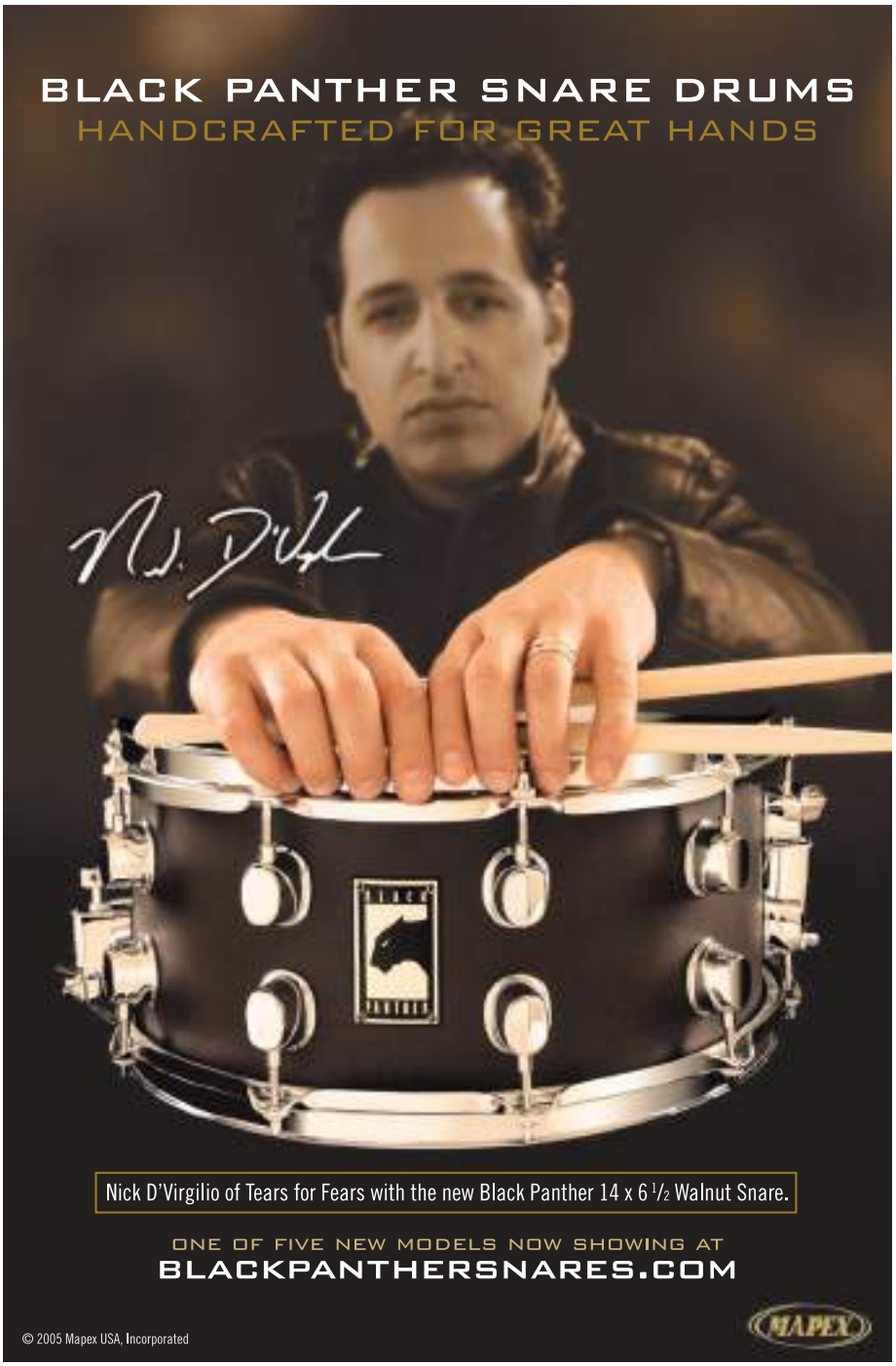
"There is a phrase you constantly used when we would mull over parts during the *Brother To Bother* album rehearsals. It was, 'I'm in heaven.' The other night, sitting silently and staring at my food, just after hearing the news about you, some patron took a bite of his buffalo burger and gasped, 'I'm in heaven.' I felt like going over to his table and asking the smiling gent if he wouldn't mind pounding out a single-stroke roll with his two feet at 180 bpm while banging out a few fills on the table with his hands in three—just to make sure it wasn't you. I wonder?

"Every time I looked at you after a solid run of a song or two, our eyes fixed, me with two thick raised brows, posing the silent question, 'How was it for you?' 'I'm in heaven,' is what you replied. You have no idea how much octane was in those words. You made me so happy. I can't help think of the magic you brought to my brother Joe's garage, to my career, and to many people.

"Mark, you have endured so much, too much. But you have stored great treasures in high places, and become a star in the eyes of angels. Therefore, tonight, when I go to sleep, when I ask how it feels for you, I will expect your usual answer.

"My love to you, Mark, and blessings on your new voyage."

Gino Vannelli



"I met Mark in 1975 at the Santa Monica Civic when he was first with Tommy Bolin, and he said, 'I need you, as I don't have a roadie.' I valued Mark's caring and non-judgment when it came to my well being. Mark was the most selfless, giving brother I have ever known. Through all the brilliant nights with Gino Vannelli and Jethro Tull, he would turn to me several times to ask how the show was going. He also made sure I had eaten and was looked after.

"I am sober today because of Mark. As the years went by and tours kept coming, Mark would ask why I was so negative. When he bought a big house in Sioux Falls and I helped him move, he told me to please consider quitting drinking. He also said that if I ever wanted his companionship, to please call, which I did in 1987. Mark never gave up or stopped following through on anything or anyone."

Jeff Ocheltree (drum tech)

"Mark was one of the best drummers of my generation. I remember Steve Smith, Mark, and I all coming up at about the same time in the early '70s. If you look at the success and joy we have gotten to experience over the years, you begin to understand the frustration Mark must have fought off knowing that, but for his battle with health problems, he would have been enjoying the same. Yet he never showed that behavior. Instead, he was always trying to be positive, hopeful, and helpful to others in more need than himself. On top of that, he continued to improve himself as a drummer. What he couldn't do physically, he made up for intellectually.

"The last time I saw him play he did something like play a 4/4 rock beat in groups of five 8th notes, all in triplets over the basic groove! I turned to Myron

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Grombacher, who was next to me, and said, 'What the hell was that?!' Myron said Mark had been working on 'counting notes'! Needless to say, we were *amazed*. All who knew Mark love him still and miss him dearly."

Terry Bozzio

"I can't believe the kind of courage Mark exhibited. We're talking about somebody who was extraordinarily gifted and a real natural and who played with a skill on top of his natural ability. He had an amazing amount of musical intuition.

"I had to come into the Vannelli situation after Mark, and he set it up for all of us. He really built the foundation. And you wonder how he was able to do so much with all he was going through. If I get a *headache*, maybe it ain't gonna come out. But none of that stuff stopped him. To be able to tap into the muse with the fortitude of a steamroller, amidst all that adversity—that's a candidate for sainthood.

"I look at Mark as an example of humanity beyond all of it. And then to be as creative a person as he was, on top of all that, is staggering. I've never seen such an example of fortitude and faith and courage, in tandem with such creativity."

Vinnie Colaiuta

"Every so often in this life we are fortunate to meet a kindred spirit, a person who will transcend ordinary friendship and become linked spiritually…as a brother. There will be a place for them in all of life's big and little moments. They will give you faith, courage, and inspiration. And somehow, just by knowing them, you become *more*. Mark Leo Craney was the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

Myron Grombacher

"Mark Craney came to us courtesy of Eddie Jobson [ex-UK, Zappa, Roxy Music], when Eddie became keyboard player for Tull during the recording of the *A* album and the tours in 1981. Mark had been working with Eddie on some solo projects, and so joined the Tull family too for the duration of Eddie's working relationship with us.

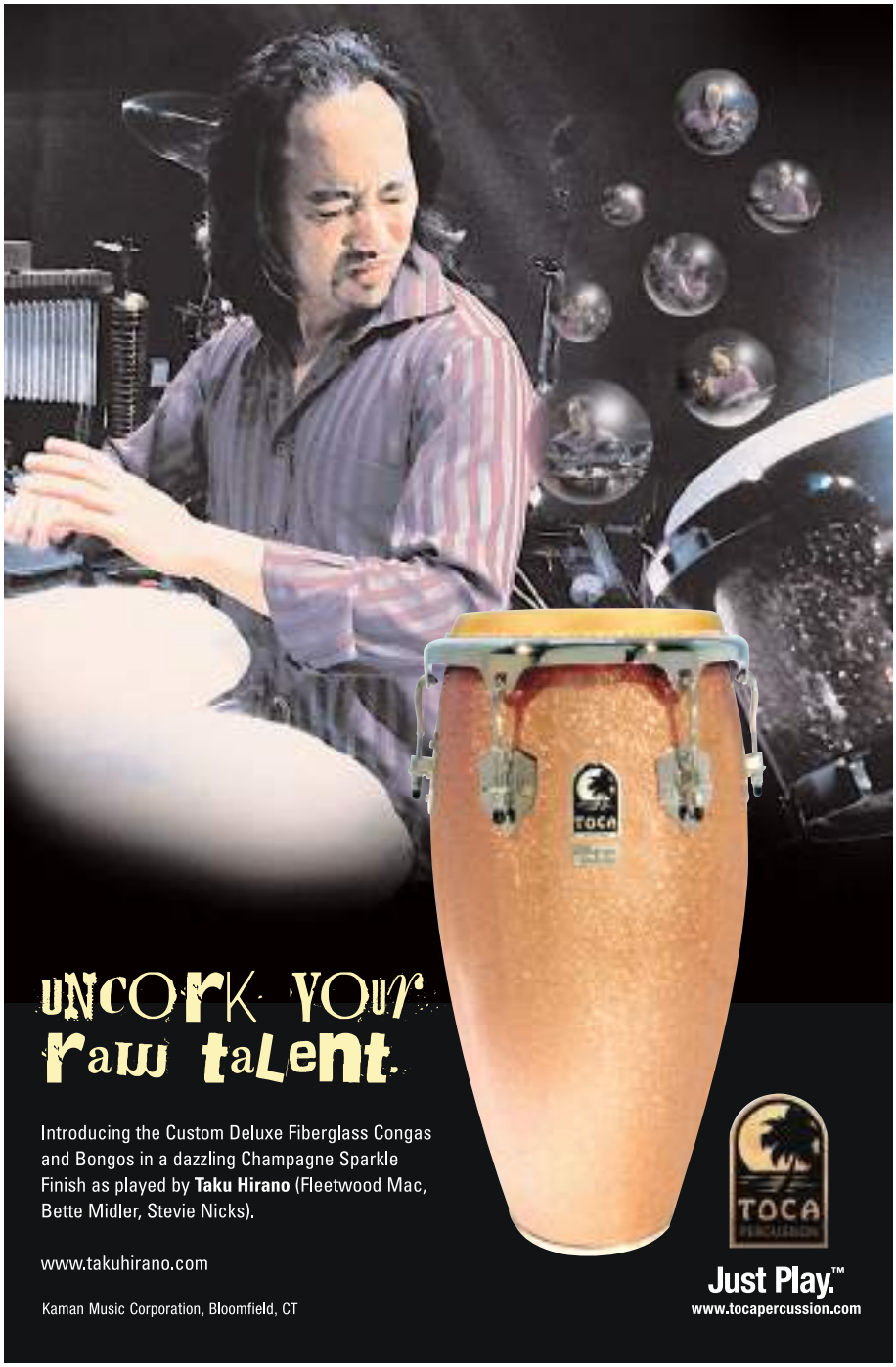
"Eddie, of course, had worked with me and Tull on tour, but not in the studio. David Pegg had never recorded with me either, and Mark was an unknown quantity as well, having come along solely on the recommendation of Eddie. To my amazement, things clicked into place very quickly. We recorded a few tracks and drafted in Tull's Martin Barre to play as well.

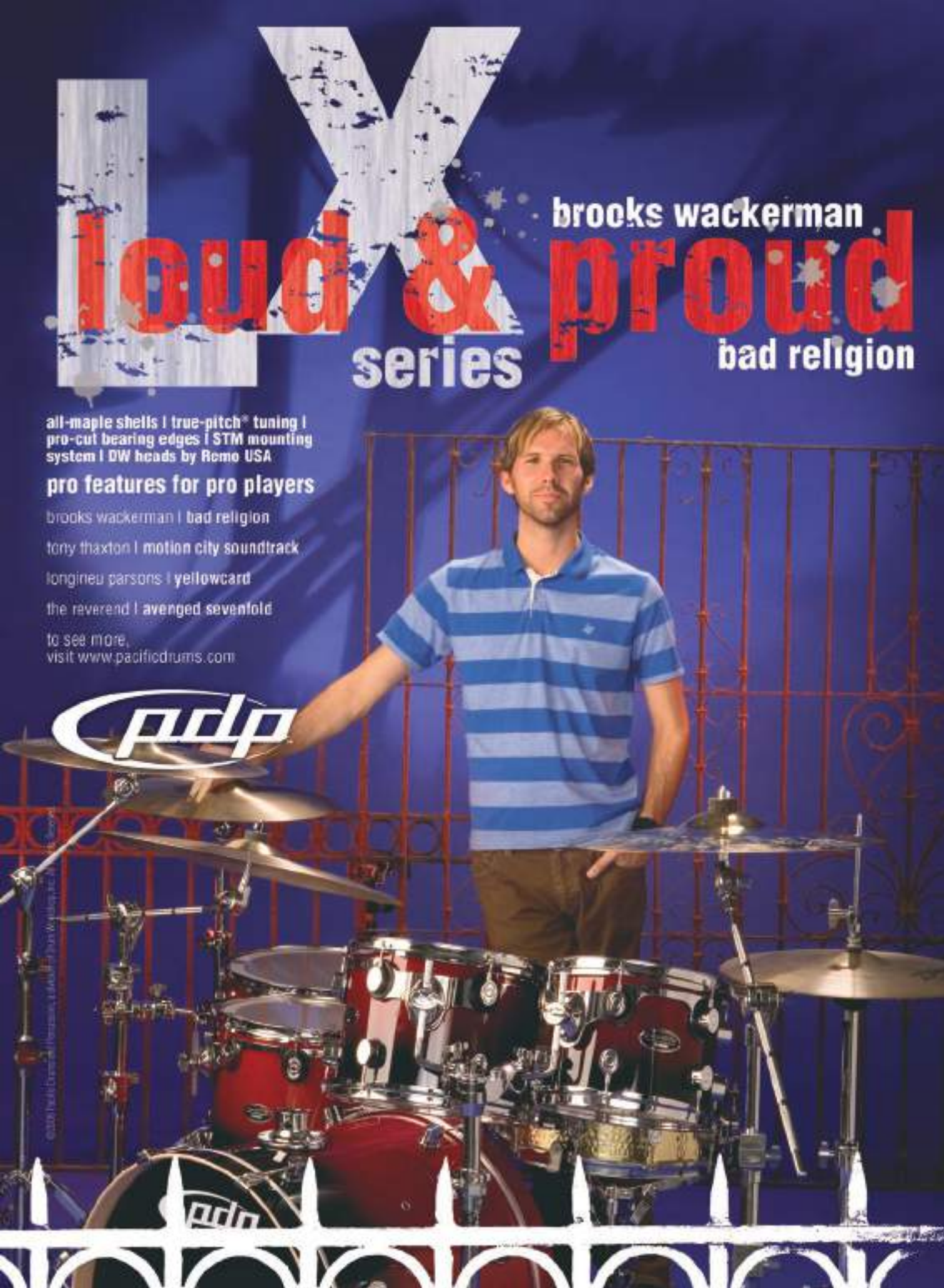
"Mark had an easy, confident style, and he had all the technical chops to bring into play whenever the right time arose. He was rarely stumped henever the more complex patterns were suggested by me or Eddie.

"Mark was a very straight-ahead guy with a laconic sense of humor and a cheerful temperament. He liked a good cigar but didn't appear to drink much or do the rock 'n' roll thing.

"Mark and I kept in touch over the years, and he was truly one of the extended tribe of Tull musicians who helped me through my musical explorations over the years. We miss him greatly."

Ian Anderson

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Sioux Falls Sage Of The Skins

by Doane Perry

We don't get many in this life. Genuine, true friends, in the deepest, rarest sense. Mark Craney and I shared a rich, colorful history together, which began in 1976 and crossed all borders of common interest.

Some of the closest friendships that I share today are directly because of Mark introducing me to so many people that I might otherwise have never known. He was the vector that we all intersected with and a major thread of continuity through so many of our lives. Mark had many "best" friends, and I feel honored to have been among them.

It is nearly impossible to encapsulate in a few paragraphs the enormous life Mark had. I can only offer some treasured moments from our own shared past.

One day Mark was over at our house, and we were sitting around in my office, talking. He knew I loved to read, and at one point he got up and walked over to my library wall and silently perused through the titles. He turned around and asked, "You read all these books?" "Pretty much, I guess," I replied. He sat himself back down again and was silent for a moment, then turned to me with one eyebrow arched upwards, saying, "You *really* ought to be a lot smarter."

Well, Mark was innately smarter, more intuitive, and wiser than almost anyone I ever knew, in music and in life. This did not come from books but from that much deeper, inner source to which Mark always seemed to have access. Maybe it was from growing up in the large, silent spaces of the Midwest. He had a great sense of humor and a dry, wicked wit that was counterbalanced by the soul of an artist, a philosopher, and a country farmer. Deeply connected to nature, animals, and people, and possessing a powerful, empathetic spirit despite a body that eventually had trouble keeping pace, his reflective, searching, and philosophical nature remained unbowed.

Great Friends: Doane and Mark

The Drum Club

Mark was undisputedly the president of the Woodland Hills Drum Club. It is not a zip code. We have no membership cards or billable dues. It is a brotherhood of hundreds of drummers and friends from around the globe, although we've grudgingly allowed in a few other instrumentalists along the way for general harmonic support. It's a non-discriminatory, non-denominational, ecumenical society of drummers, which all began in Mark's garage in 1985.

Mancini's Club in Canoga Park, California often hosted the Woodland Hills Drum Club Night in LA, which Mark led, and they were always an event. We would customarily have two to three drumkits set up and have different combinations of some of the best players in LA turn up to play together. That was a really fun, informal gig where we could all go and blow out the fluorocarbons.

It seemed as if at one time or another, every great player that we knew locally, or who was in town visiting, came and sat in. And every night Mark threw down the gauntlet. Sometimes it was a little scary, but always fun and often an "E" ticket ride with player after player egging each other on. Tony Williams showed up one night and sat in the front row. I can tell you, that put the fear of God into just about everyone *except* Mark.

Mark was always the heart and soul of it, and he commanded the vessel like a fearless sea captain, keeping things in check and moving everyone forward. One notable exception occurred, however, at the end of an evening when two fairly over-refreshed participants got up for the last drum trio performance of the night with Mark, who, as always, was in the center position. During the middle of the song, a short trading of fours amongst the drummers was supposed to take place, but it quickly degenerated into a drum bloodbath between the other two drummers. Mark had a very low tolerance for that sort of nonsense. He finally just stopped playing, crossed his arms, and gave each of the duelists a withering,

"Are you quite finished now?" look, which somehow cut through the haze of their considerable inebriation and shocked them back into momentary sobriety, whereupon he counted the rest of the band back in and finished the song with the two offending knuckleheads towing the line.

At one point during the 1980s Mark had decided to move back to his hometown of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. On my way back from New York enroute to Los Angeles, he invited me to come visit him in his new pad. And so I did. And what a pad! Huge, open, bright, three stories, overlooking the beautiful, sprawling plains of South Dakota. A quiet, bucolic paradise with the drum room every drummer dreams about, which resided on the bottom floor. Picture this: one room the length of the entire house and nearly as deep, with two enormous double bass drumsets side by side in mirror image of one another. Don't forget, Mark was a southpaw, so he sat on the left side and the right-handed kit sat on the right. Flanking the outside on the far right was his little jazz kit, and flanking the far left side was his small funk kit. I lost track of the hours we spent in that room playing and playing. But the best part of the room was the view. All the drumsets faced a floor-to-ceiling wall of double glazed windows that overlooked fields of wheat, which gently swayed back and forth to the muted thunder. Every field mouse within a hundred miles probably moved to *North* Dakota. (Oh, woe be to us poor misunderstood drummers.)

After the ritualistic purging, we would then go off for a drive over the plains or a long walk in the fields followed by some organic tea. It was heaven.

Inner Reserves

Over the years Mark endured many physical indignities and insults to his body from diabetes, two kidney transplants, small strokes, surgeries, dialysis, and a myriad of associated ailments. Yet he remained a powerful, living example of overcoming adversity, which was a demonstration of his enormous inner strength. Mark faced obstacle after setback and yet continued to rebound, astonishing all of us—and occasionally himself too. It was interesting that when he was in some of these terrible physical states, probably halfway out of his body, there were still faculties that remained fully functioning and cognizant, though on a very different level.

Unfortunately, in late August, 2005 he suffered a debilitating stroke, which left him unable to eat or speak. A major improvement did occur when they were finally able to provide Mark with a trach tube, which allowed him to talk again—a bit haltingly, but nonetheless, understandable. This was a huge step forward and a great boost to his spirits—and ours too. We could have a conversation again! How much all of us had missed that, and we made the most of the opportunity.

At various times, all of his friends and family had asked Mark if they could bring down something to the hospital to provide some diversionary activity. He didn't really enjoy TV…small wonder, probably too many food commercials anyway, which were a painful reminder of all that he was missing. He declined CD players, radios, iPods. Eventually he showed some interest in board games. They engaged his mind and were interactive.

During his last six weeks, I had decided that I really wanted to play Mark some music during our visits, some of *his* music. So I brought down my iPod and two sets of my good Bose headphones and said, "Mark, you *have* to listen to this." He had no idea what I was going to play for him, and the first thing up was the live version of "Brother To Brother" from his solo CD, *Something With A Pulse*, which Gino Vannelli had generously donated. In fact, every single artist who appeared on that CD donated their tracks, some of which Mark appeared on, and others that were donated from people who simply admired his work and wished to help him. As soon as "Brother To Brother" started, his face just lit up. After some particularly wicked and perplexing fill, a big smile crossed his face and he looked at me, whereupon we both cracked up in delight. He held up five fingers, silently mouthing, "Those were fives," during another blistering break. I think it made him feel really good to hear that and relive some of those wonderful, magical musical highlights. After that stunning display with Gino, he said, "So, what's next?"

It was one of my all-time favorite performances of his, "Black Sunday," with Jethro Tull, live at the LA Sports Arena. I was so happy he was enjoying music again, especially some of his own musical contributions. And on it went. Track after track. At the end of all the music and the talking I looked at the clock, shocked to see that it was 1:30 in the morning. I was amazed that the staff hadn't kicked me out. I think they, too, realized that Mark was having a great time, and simply pretended I wasn't there.

I said to him, "You must be tired, I should let you go to sleep." He replied,

"He was like a dancer on the drums. Relaxed, fluid, powerful, dynamic, and possessing incredible technique. Mark was, quite simply, amazing."

"No, I'm really enjoying myself, I'll let you know." So we talked until about 2:00 A.M., and then I gave in. He wore *me* out that night!

Mark's keen powers of observation never left him, even when one thought he probably was not taking notice. He was always showing interest and concern for each one of us, particularly if he sensed something different, reading the subtle, nearly imperceptible changes in his friends. Perhaps his condition made him more finely attuned to the subtleties of changes within each of us, giving him an ability to "read" his friends in a more finely detailed way. But he was quite a tough guy, and despite—or perhaps *because* of—his handicaps and disabilities, he lived a richly textured interior life, of which we were all lucky recipients. At times stoic, even ascetic, he was always available, warm, and understanding of his friends and family.

We talked about death and dying on many occasions over the years. I know he wasn't afraid of death, but this time he knew things were quite different—we all did—and the real proximity of it was tangible in a way in which it never had been in our abstract, objective previous discussions. Now it had become a very subjective point of view for him, and for the first time was a little scary. There was still so much he wanted to experience. However, he openly expressed his doubt as to whether he would be able to make the long journey of recovery back to what he jokingly referred to as his "full thirty percent."

And The Music

Mark was a stunning player. A natural. A giant of his instrument, gifted with an extraordinary musical imagination that left me many times just simply shaking my head. How did he *do* that? Always sensitive to the music. Capable of great dynamics, subtle shadings, ditch-digging, or wonderfully complex grooves and jaw-dropping breaks.

Those beautifully angular, abstract fills, and such an unbelievably good sense of time, note placement, and phrasing—all the elements that gave Mark his uniquely identifiable sonic identity. That effortless fluidity and deeply rooted musicality provided him with the ability to play in any musical setting and yet still leave that immediately recognizable stamp. That was *him*.

A wonderful moment that occurred in 1979 on Gino Vannelli's *Brother To Brother* tour is a pretty good illustration of Mark's relaxed approach to everything. This is the point where Mark and I really began to be great friends. At the time I was playing with Phyllis Hyman, who was an extraordinary R&B jazz singer. We were the opening act on the tour.

We were playing at the Omni in Atlanta one night, and I happened to be in the Vannelli band's dressing room shortly before show time. Mark was stretched out on one of those hard wooden benches that are the standard dressing room decor of most American sports arenas. Eyes closed, possibly asleep, while all around him people were tuning up, laughing, talking, practicing, all preparing to go on stage and play this very demanding music. The road manager walks in and announces, "Five minutes." Mark slowly opened his eyes, sat up, stretched (once!), casually walked on stage before a loud, excited audience of 15,000 people, and played like a fire-breathing dragon. I just could not even *comprehend* how he could possibly do something like that.

Mark was, quite simply, amazing. He was like a dancer on the drums. Relaxed, fluid, powerful, dynamic, and possessing incredible technique, he punctuated the music while seeming to freely improvise between all the complexities of the arrangements. Effortlessly driving the large ensemble like a Ferrari, Mark was a phenomenon to watch and hear.

Since joining Jethro Tull in 1984, I've had innumerable people ask about Mark. Many knew that he had experienced some serious health problems and just wanted to see how he was faring and to pass along their best wishes. He was so loved and respected, and made a huge impression on people with his brilliant playing. I wish they had the good fortune to have known him—though, of course, in a way they all did.

In his very quiet and understated way, Mark was tremendously proud of his association with the Jethro Tull family. When I would speak to him from the road, he would often conclude the conversation by saying, "Give my love to the lads."

Mark always felt a deep connection with the band, turning up whenever we played locally and *really* appreciating the music, as only someone who has had the unique perspective of experiencing it from the inside can have.

He had the heart of a lion: strong, proud, dignified, and fiercely loyal. His business card read "Mark Craney—Drums—No excuses." I thought that was brilliant, succinct, and very Zen. Quite a bit like him.

So long for now, old friend.

If you would like read more about Mark Craney, go to www.jtull.com/news/markcraneydpobit.cfm. For information about Mark's CD, Mark Craney & Friends—Something With A Pulse, *go to www.artistshop.com.*

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death cab for cutie's Jason McGerr

Team Player—With Technique

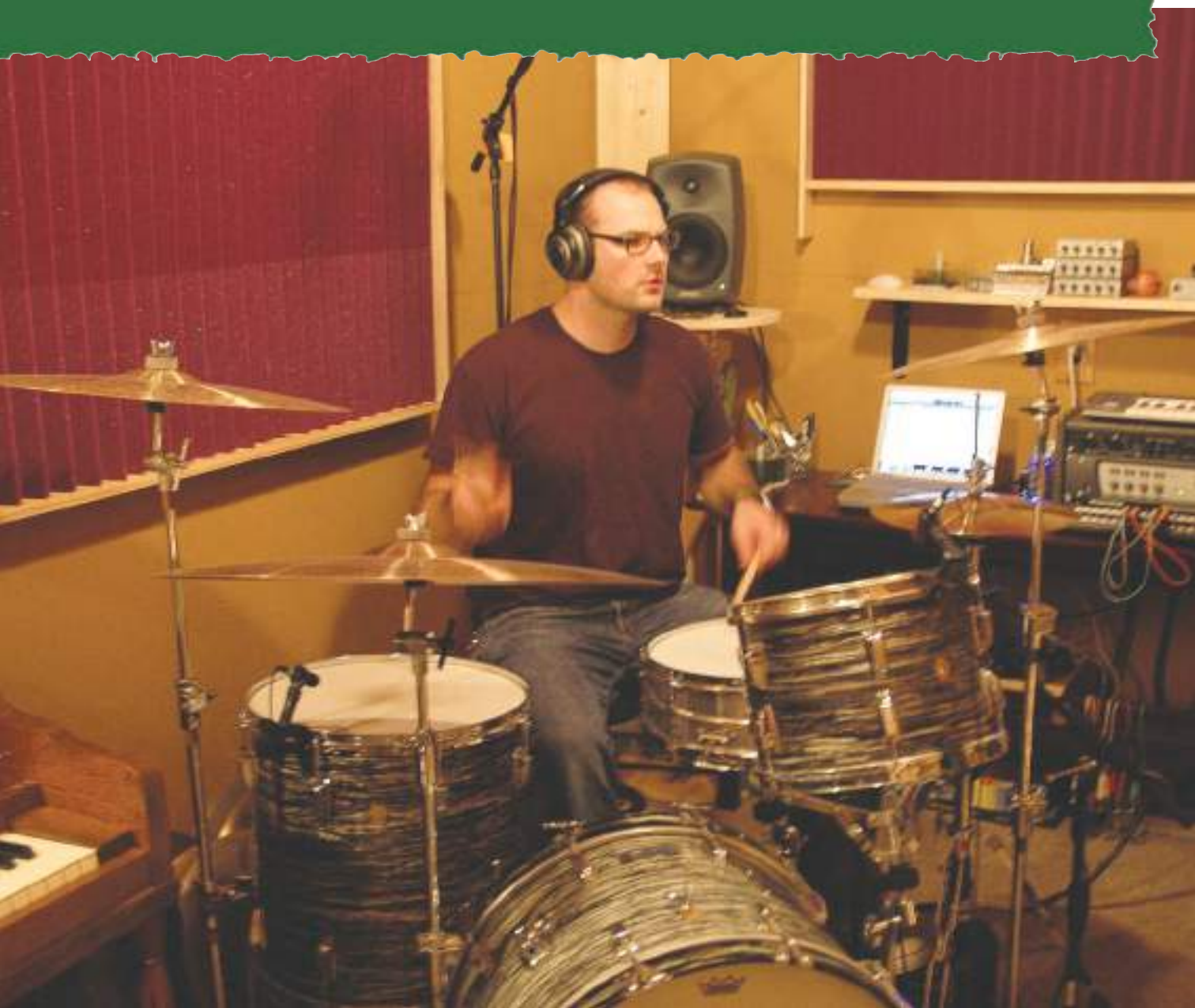
BY WALEED RASHIDI

Five bass drums, sixteen snare drums, three different sets of toms, and a host of cymbals, not to mention nearly two dozen mic's strategically placed to capture it all—*that's* the scope of the percussion arsenal Death Cab For Cutie's Jason McGerr had at his disposal during the recording sessions for his band's major-label debut, fifth full-length, and Grammy-nominated release, *Plans*.

But listen closely to *Plans*, and you'll notice that's probably where the complexity ends. McGerr's performance, hailing from the school of "less is more," lies in the careful details—the subtle attack sound of his stick's bead on the ride, the ghost-stroked snare that creeps through the room mic's, the deliberately tuned bass drum that simply feels *just right*. Even on stage, it's all in the minutiae for the Seattle-based stickman: the way McGerr's head swivels from side to side, the delicate yet calculated nature of his hi-hat work, the switching from matched to traditional grip within a song.

A self-tagged "music school nerd" and instructor at the Seattle Drum School for the past ten years, McGerr joined Death Cab For Cutie in 2002 and played on the band's '03 full-length *Transatlanticism*. His extensive technical and creative background came as a major plus for a band whose success was, at the time, escalating largely in the independent, underground rock music scene.

But now the Death Cab foursome—which includes guitarist/vocalist Ben Gibbard (the band's primary songwriter and also a drummer), guitarist/keyboardist/album producer Chris Walla, and bassist Nick Harmer—has now found themselves sharing stages with some of rock's biggest names. Yet we found that McGerr still maintains an everyday simplicity and enthusiasm for the art and theory of drumming. "I still have so much to learn," he says. "And I'm just learning that I need to learn a lot more. Because of the new challenges that I've been faced with being on the road all the time, the list goes on and on and on. It's like going back to being a drummer for the first time."



MD: What were some of the differences between *Plans* and *Transatlanticism* for you?

Jason: *Transatlanticism* isn't that much different from *Plans* to me. It's sort of another chapter in the band's career. I don't know if, because I had just finished one chapter, I was consciously trying to do something else for the next. We found a way of working and we just sort of went with it. I think the only thing I really wanted to do was try to throw in some more Scottish rudiments. [laughs]

Ben is an incredible songwriter, and he writes songs that don't need a whole lot of play to them. Coming from a pretty schooled background where I've tried to read every drum method book, copy every drummer, and practice as much as I can, it's been a really great thing for me to try to play *less*—to just play the kick, snare, and the hi-hat for a majority of what we do. And when we set out to do *Plans,* I sort of had that same approach. But we did get to stretch out a little more on this record and take a few turns.

I planned to practice a lot, and I didn't. After *Transatlanticism*, I was like, Man, I'm really going to work hard to get my hands and feet up, and really work on my time and everything. And then, of course, we just toured and toured. And after touring for eight months straight on *Transatlanticism*, I just wanted to take a break from playing, so I did some more teaching.

MD: With Ben being a drummer and the primary songwriter, communication must be rather effective.

Jason: We communicate well. Yeah, there have been songwriters who don't really know how to articulate what they're looking for. I love it when a guy can sit down and show me what they want, or at least sing it or air-drum it. I've always worked with songwriters who have challenged me to come up with things that I wouldn't normally play, to think outside of the box. To me, that's the human version of going through somebody's book or watching a DVD or taking lessons from another drummer. I'm taking lessons from songwriters on how they want their songs interpreted. I love the total education of it. And like I said, Ben's got great ideas.

MD: As for the drum parts, does Ben lay those down with a drum machine?

Jason: Some are down that way, and some he actually physically plays on his demos. If those parts work great with the song, then that's what I'll play. I've always got to throw in a little salt and pepper, spice it up and do my thing. But if there's a great part, then it's tough to deny.

It's like changing a melody. For instance, if there's a bass line that somebody writes, and it's a total hook, then why would you want to change it? It's me playing the drums on the album, but I don't have any problems, especially when it comes to the drums, playing a beat that someone else has played, let alone a beat that's been played for fifty years.

MD: Tell me about the studio in Massachusetts where you tracked your parts.

Jason: We knew that we wanted to find a destination outside of Seattle. It was just time to do that. It's really easy to be home

Jason's Drums

Drums: Ludwig Classic Maple in mahogany stain finish
A. 6½x14 hammered bronze snare
B. 9x13 rack tom
C. 16x16 floor tom
D. 14x26 bass drum

Cymbals: Paiste
1. 15" Giant Beat hi-hats
2. 18" Giant Beat crash
3. 24" Giant Beat ride
4. 20" Giant Beat crash

Percussion: LP
aa. Cyclops tambourine

Hardware: Ludwig mounts, Tama Iron Cobra hi-hat stand, DW 5000AD bass drum pedal (medium spring tension) with Danmar Zoro beater, DW 6700 flat-base cymbal stands, Keplinger Ching Ring
Heads: Remo coated Emperor on snare batter with Ambassador snare-side (medium tight, Moon Gel on batter), coated Emperors on tops of toms with coated Ambassadors on bottoms (toms tuned a fifth apart), coated Emperor on bass drum batter with coated Ambassador on front (batter head has 4" felt strip for muffling, front head has felt strip and hole)
Sticks: Vic Firth American Classic 5A model (hickory with wood tip)
Electronics: DrumKat 3.8, Akai Z4 sampler, Behringer mixer
Microphones: Audix SCX25A for overheads, Audix D6 and Shure 91 on kick, Audix M1244 on snare, hat, and toms, Audix M1290 Omni for stage sound, Sensaphonics in-ear monitors

"It's great to have *Stick Control* and *Syncopation* down cold, but if you can't get along with other people in a band or communicate your ideas to them, it's useless."

and get distracted and not focus on the music. We really wanted to focus on this record, especially since it was our major-label debut. Chris had gone around and seen a few different studios, and one of the studios that came highly recommended from a friend was Longview Farms in northeastern Massachusetts. It's a hundred-year-old barn that's a hundred feet long and has three levels with a horse stable in the middle of it. And you go there, you live there, they feed you, and you just track and record all day long. The barn was incredibly warm, very woody. We were isolated and surrounded by a lot of space, which I think contributed to the outcome of the record. The record has a lot of space at times. It's very relaxed, just sort of one big exhale. That's kind of what happened there.

The drums were all done down there, except for two songs, which were tracked at Smart, Butch Vig's studio in Madison, Wisconsin. But I loved it at Longview Farms. I grew up in a small town, so for me to get up every morning, have a cup of coffee, and stare out at a snowy pasture with my practice pad and then get to play drums with microphones surrounding me, was a great experience.

MD: Your snare tone seems to have a deliberate texture to it.

Jason: Chris tends to like drier snare drums. You know, it's funny, everything goes in waves. When you're a kid, you duct-tape up all your drums. But when you learn how to tune, you like to hear your toms and your snare drum ring, and you go for the Manu Katché two-inch rimshot. But I've come back to wanting things a little bit drier and a little more articulate.

I think the trend electronically is to move to drier drum sounds. If you were to obtain a sample bank from any of the software companies that supply banks of drum sounds, whether it be Reason or something from GarageBand, a lot of the sounds are much drier. It's fascinating to me how styles change and then come back. I'm not quite to the single-headed tom kit with Black Dot heads, but I suspect I'm not that far away. There's a cool articulation and feel that happens when you dry things up.

For *Plans*, sometimes there were two muffle rings on my snare drum. I actually used a coated Pinstripe on one snare, and sometimes I used Renaissance heads. I really tried to select different drums and different sounds to go with each song. To me, a shorter drum sound has everything to do with the tempo of the song. More ring and more sustain lends itself to being a little more sparse with your playing. It's just like a ride cymbal that has sustain.

MD: Your kit on "Summer Skin" has a very distinctive tone to it.

Jason: We went for that. I had just recorded a bunch of beats and loops and sent them over to Ben, and one that he grabbed and wrote a song around was "Summer Skin." I just like that "50 Ways To Leave Your Lover" thing—that super-loose, dragging hand that Steve Gadd has. I guess I wanted to be like Gadd!

I used an 18" bass drum tuned wide open on that one, and that's why those sounds are a bit crazier. And Chris positioned mic's around the kit from every angle. There's nothing usual about that. He's like, "Can you take away your toms so I can put this mic' in at this crazy angle, straight on or upside down, and point it at your shell?" There's always some weird method of mayhem or madness that he's got. And I'm totally for it. We come up with what I think are unique sounds. And it makes me play differently too.

MD: On the hi-hat work that you're doing

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in the verses of "What Sarah Said," what was your objective with that accented phrase?

Jason: On "What Sarah Said," there's a slight delay on the hi-hat, so if you listen really closely, you can pick out the delayed hits and the ones that aren't. What happens is that Chris records something, messes with the sounds, and turns it into something that's a little different from what I'm playing. Then I have to come back and learn what it was he did to play it live. But on the accents, what you're hearing is what I'm playing.

It's a real characteristic beat. You know where it really comes from? I've got to give props here to Peter Erskine. Way back when, I can't even tell you which year, *Modern Drummer* used to include those clear 7" discs in the magazine featuring a song or a lesson with a different drummer. Simon Phillips played a great track on one. Peter Erskine did an educational piece on hi-hat variations, and he played a beat that inspired the "What Sarah Said" groove. He went back and forth, playing quarters, 8ths, 16ths, and "&s" on the hi-hat over the beat. That got me started on independence exercises and sort of breaking up hi-hat patterns. I was working on "e's" and "ah's," doing dotted-8th patterns within 16th-note groups, and dotted-8th accent patterns. So I love to play a real simple beat with my kick and snare, and throw in all these hi-hat variations and accents that make the beat, in my opinion, come alive.

At the end of that song is a total Scottish thing. When you asked me earlier about what I was shooting for with *Plans*, I just wanted to use one rudiment that I used on a practice pad that I never thought would transfer to drumset—just try and slip it in there. I did that at the end of "What Sarah Said," which is like a reversed double-paradiddle with a flam at the start of each diddle. I played that between the ride and the snare.

MD: You have a fantastic consistency on "Stable Song." How did you keep it so nailed-down at such a slow tempo?

Jason: I think that no matter how hard I try, I'll never be a real fast drummer. I think I gravitate towards mid-to-slower tempos. I love the tune "Hang Time," and that again is sort of the product of what I was talking about before—tuning, and the

Making Plans

Chris Walla On Jason McGerr

Guitarist and album producer Chris Walla of Death Cab For Cutie has been a part of Jason McGerr's recordings longer than McGerr has actually been a member of the band. In fact, their relationship stems back before Death Cab's existence.

"It was very early on, one of the very first things I recorded that I wasn't involved in," Walla says of producing one of McGerr's earlier projects. "That one was just everything I could do to get drum sounds to a piece of tape."

Fast forward to the present, where Walla is still helming McGerr's sessions, this time pulling double duty as the producer of Death Cab's *Plans* and as his bandmate. And with such a strong collaborative history, he's glad to be working with McGerr once again. "All of us in the band always talked about playing with Jason at some point, because he's a fantastic drummer and a really even-keeled guy." McGerr adds that Jason had the chance to join the band at an earlier time, but turned it down because he was too involved with other projects.

Walla has also had the opportunity to observe McGerr's development into the stellar drummer he is today. "Jason is a technical master and always has been," Walla reports. "In recent years, though, he's gotten very song-focused, which is something I'm always a proponent of. He's got chops like nobody else, but he knows when to pull 'em out and when to sit back, leave it alone, and just play the song.

"I like that he's got such a large toolbox of ideas and concepts," Walla adds. "And his actual tools—his drum collection—is pretty staggering."

Walla notes that McGerr's involvement in Death Cab works its way into other aspects of the songs. "Ben [Gibbard, Death Cab vocalist/guitarist] and I often gravitate towards similar things," he says. "And Jason is really good about taking those things, taking other people's ideas, and going, 'What if you broke that up?' And then he'll tap out some sort of concept for a guitar part or for the way a vocal should be phrased. He's very good at building a rhythmic landscape that'll work in a song context, and I really appreciate that."

Since Walla and Gibbard are both drummers, they often sit at McGerr's kit to play ideas for him, to which McGerr applies his personal imprint. "Usually it's *cool* different and *good* different," Chris says. "I tend to gravitate towards really super straight stuff, and Ben has a lot of drum hooks that need to be tweaked a little here and there. It's a collaborative process."

As for the technical end of recording *Plans*, Walla says he's a fan of capturing as many textural elements as possible in a drum sound. "I'll record twenty to twenty-five drum tracks from Jason. I sort of just mix and match them until I have something that feels right. I'm usually using two kick mic's these days…lots of different combinations of things.

"I feel that so much of the personality of a room is a result of whatever's *in* the room," he adds. "When Jason's playing in a room, and all thirteen snare drums are in there, all thirteen may be buzzing. I might gather all of them together in front of the kick drum and mike them. That's totally fun and brings a different sound. I do stuff like that all the time." **Waleed Rashidi**

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drums and cymbals that I select for the tune. I used a 24" ride on that song that was super washy, as well as a 1940s Walberg & Auge 26" bass drum. It belonged to one of the studio techs. It had calfskin heads, along with a rack tom and a snare drum. The best word to describe that kit was "soggy." You just sunk into it.

I was able to play that song well because of that drumset. If you're going for a hike, you put on hiking boots. If you're going to surf, you put on a wetsuit. If you're going to play a slow song, you don't want to use a super tight, fast, loud kit. Sloshy hats, 20" crashes, and playing traditional grip versus matched grip will help.

MD: How long have you played both traditional and matched grip?

Jason: I played matched grip for ten years. Then I found an incredible teacher named John Fisher in Vancouver, and I switched over. He's a world-champion Scottish drummer, and he owns the world of technique. He played with legendary Pipe Band champion drummer Jim Kilpatrick. These guys do things with their hands that convince you that it's worth investigating. So I switched over, went traditional grip for like six years, and then went back to matched. I flip back and forth now. It just makes you think differently. Sometimes I'll switch up in the same song. Like on "What Sarah Said," I play matched in the beginning, and then for the pattern at the end, I play it traditional.

MD: Please talk about the drums that you brought to the studio.

Jason: It's all Ludwig stuff, old and new kits—old '65s, like the 13"/16"/22" Ringo black oyster pearl kit. As for the new pieces, I brought wrapped and lacquered drums. The bass drums ranged from 18" to a 14x26, which is what I use live. That's an interesting size for me, because it plays more like a 22". It's a really weird feel. I like 24s, but for some reason I play 22s and 26s better than 24s. It's faster or something. I'm using a Zoro beater right now; I really like that felt slap. I love Danmar beaters, but I go back and forth between the Zoro and the standard Danmar beater. But not the long length, the standard

McGerr Tracks

RECORDINGS

Artist	Album
Death Cab For Cutie	Plans
Death Cab For Cutie	Transatlanticism
Death Cab For Cutie	John Byrd EP
Travis Morrison	Travistan
Andrea Maxand	Where The Words Go
Andrea Maxand	Paper Cut
Eureka Farm	The View
Eureka Farm	Analog

FAVORITES

Artist	Album	Drummer
Can	Ege Bamyasi	Jaki Liebezeit
Talk Talk	Laughing Stock	Lee Harris
John Coltrane	A Love Supreme	Elvin Jones
Led Zeppelin	all	John Bonham
Soundgarden	Superunknown	Matt Cameron
The Roots	Phrenology	?uestlove
Pretty Girls Make Graves	The New Romance	Nick Dewitt

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length. If I get the long one, the beater hits in the center of the head, and I don't want that.

MD: You think that because it's an off-center hit, you get a quicker reaction and rebound?

Jason: Yes, I think you do, the same way a drummer would gravitate towards the edge of a snare drum to play a better press roll. I think that I found a little niche in playing 26" bass drums. They're not being used as much these days.

MD: But your 26" has a shallow shell.

Jason: Right. It's a 14" depth. It's different, old-school. But for a 26" I can't imagine playing anything deeper.

I collect a lot of gear. And I love the way different gear makes me play. It's only recently that I've found a cymbal I want to use all the time, and that's the Paiste Giant Beat, a brand new series that I totally fell in love with.

I think it's about consistency when you're touring. It's nice to have an instrument that you're comfortable with every night. And because you never know whether you'll be tired, excited, homesick, or whatever, at least having something constant like drums, cymbals, and sticks—having the same feel when you sit down and play—is important to me. When I talk about all this different stuff that I own and use in the studio, that's a different deal. You're reaching for new ideas and you're not playing the same songs every night.

MD: Is there some kind of warm-up exercise routine you like to stick to?

Jason: I travel with method books. One in particular is called *The Encyclopedia Of Reading Rhythms*. It's a great one to work through, especially with different systems of exercise. I love to work on technique with my hands and sight-read different exercises with my feet, and vice versa. I'll work on a rocking technique with the bass drum foot and exercise sight-reading with the hands. I think that reading really helps me relax.

I warm up every night before I play, unless there's some reason I can't. I spend a lot of time warming up my fingers, which is odd, because I don't use them all that much live. I don't use them as much as, say, motions—meaning the Moeller method. I find if I overdo my wrists, then I can tax myself before I even hit the stage. So if I can, I just work on the fulcrum and the fingers. Then if I associate myself with that feeling before I get on stage, then I've got that to fall back on. The worst thing I could do, and I've seen some guys do it, is play on a pillow for an hour before the show. I would rather save my energy for the show than to break into a sweat beforehand.

MD: What has being in Death Cab For Cutie taught you?

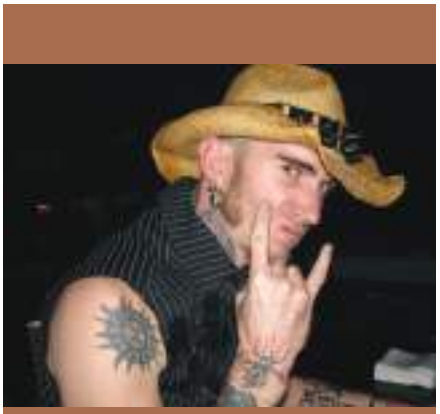
Jason: It's taught me how a band works and how a group of people can function and communicate. It's great to have *Stick Control* and *Syncopation* down cold, but if you can't get along with other people in a band or communicate your ideas to them, it's useless. You can be a solo drummer, teach drumming, and concern yourself with only the instrument. But to me, that's only part of it.

You have to have a business mind. You have to be open and able to communicate effectively. You need to take breaks sometimes, you need to not worry about things so much, and you need to not push as hard as you think you might sometimes. Of course, there are times when you have to work harder than you've ever worked in your life.

I've been in situations where I've had to make the best music possible in the worst possible environments. I can't stress about it. I have to be totally okay with it. And sometimes a student can come in, have a really bad day, and the last thing they feel capable of is overcoming challenges behind their drumset. Even if it's the simplest thing, there's so much distraction and activity in their minds. Talk about distractions: When you're with a band, there's a whole lot of stuff going on, especially at this level of the game, where you're asked to do things that don't have much to do with music. But it's all a part of it.

I'm really thankful for being able to experience what we've been able to accomplish as a band and what it's taught me. Touring every day is like driving the same road to work every day. You notice these potholes and you can either drive around them, or you can fill 'em in and fix 'em. And that's what I do when I come home and practice. I fill in the holes.

MD Radio **To hear tracks from Jason, go to www.moderndrummer.com.**



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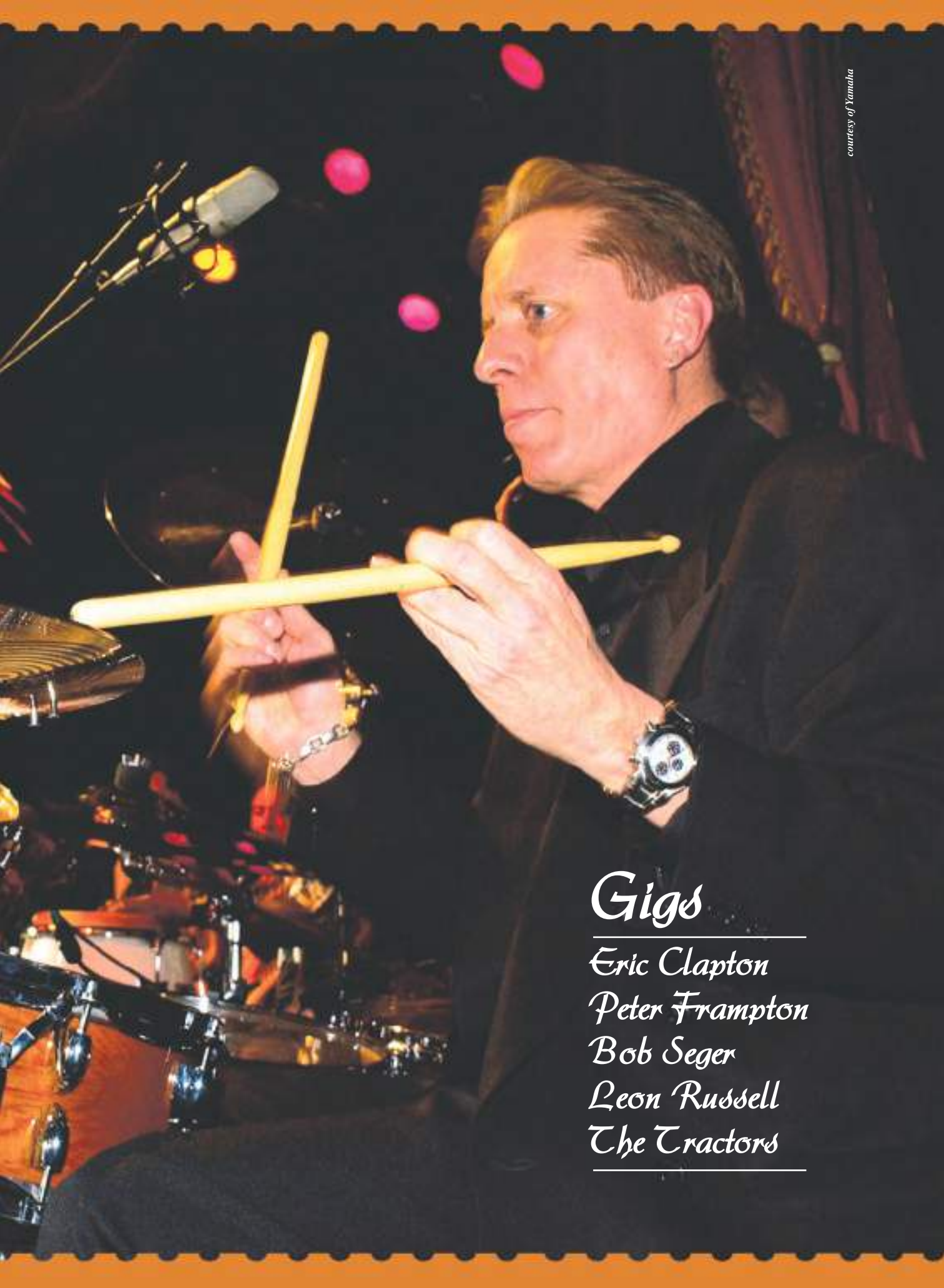
Jamie Oldaker

The Ultimate Journeyman

by Robyn Flans

Guitarist, musician, legend, Eric Clapton is a household name. And of course, everyone has heard his classic recordings "I Shot The Sheriff," "Cocaine," "Wonderful Tonight," and "Lay Down Sally." The drummer who provided the grooving pulse to all of those classic tracks is none other than Jamie Oldaker.



courtesy of Yamaha

Gigs

Eric Clapton
Peter Frampton
Bob Seger
Leon Russell
The Tractors

courtesy of Yamaha

A 1977 Rolling Stone review of Clapton's album *Slowhand* described Oldaker perfectly when it stated, "The guitar/drums relationship is crisp and authoritative." That's true, but there's more. Oldaker is a song guy. He plays what he feels is right for the piece of music he's given. Case in point: the four Clapton songs mentioned are very different in feel, but Oldaker nailed each one and helped them become the classics they are.

Completely self-taught, Oldaker first played with Leon Russell, going on to work with Bob Seger, Peter Frampton, and of course Clapton, with whom he recorded nine albums and performed on the historic *24 Nights* release at Albert Hall (with Steve Ferrone) and at Live Aid. In the '90s, Oldaker enjoyed success in the country market with The Tractors. The drummer has even toured with KISS guitarist Ace Frehley.

What has this ultimate journeyman been up to lately? He just produced a solo release called *Mad Dogs And Okies*. Featuring a variety of legendary and new talent, it's a fascinating listen, and it shows Oldaker's strengths as a musician.

Jamie Oldaker calls himself a survivor. Indeed, anyone who has thrived for three decades in the music business and has been able to keep reinventing himself is definitely just that. A review of his newest *Mad Dogs* album stated, "Oldaker is a steady drummer who, judging by the stellar lineup on this CD, clearly enjoys tremendous respect from his peers." That may be an understatement.

MD: What gave you the idea to connect your project to Oklahoma?

Jamie: I had that group The Tractors, which did pretty well in the '90s. When that disbanded, I thought, it would be fun to go back to a part of my life when I lived in Oklahoma and was working with Leon Russell and J.J. Cale, and to involve people who were in my life back then in the '70s. I thought it would be fun to make a record like we used to, before the record companies got hold of all these guys and messed up their careers. Just go in the studio, set some mic's up, and record as an ensemble, everybody at the same time.

"Musicians tell me I'm comfortable to play with. Hey, that's my job."

So I thought, who is the most famous country person I know who has something to do with Oklahoma, who I could call at home? And that was Vince Gill. I called him up and he said he'd love to be involved. Then I thought, who was the most famous rock person I could call up? It was Eric, obviously. He said, "That sounds like a lot of fun. I'm in."

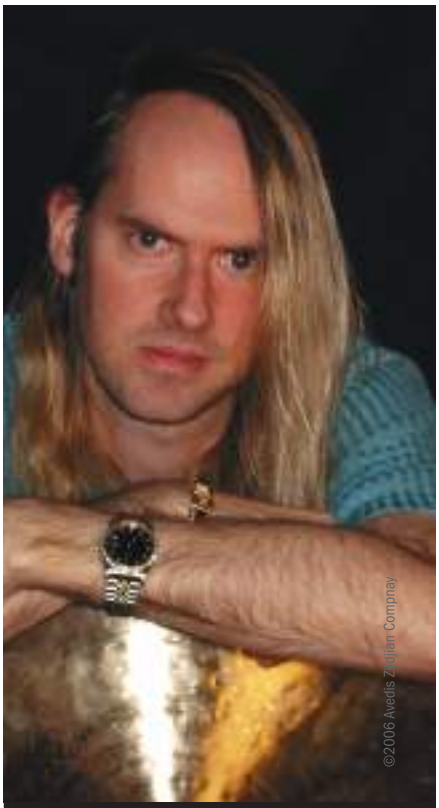
Then I contacted Ronnie Dunn from Brooks & Dunn, who I grew up with, but his record label refused to let him do it. I grew up with Leon Russell, but he told a friend of mine that he didn't want anything to do with this project. I didn't know why, and finally a friend of mine asked him and Leon's response was, "Let me make something perfectly clear. Jamie deserted me." I had left him in 1974 to record *461 Ocean Boulevard* with Eric Clapton. Apparently he *still* holds a grudge.

I had Joe & Ellen, a brother/sister act I'm working with, cut Leon's "Song For You," so I still got him on the album anyway! We also have Taj Mahal; most of his band from the late '60s was from Tulsa. So I got a hold of the original bass player and drummer, and they hadn't played in a while. But I got them together and it sounded like they had never stopped. And I got Willie Nelson and J.J. Cale involved. Finally, I contacted Peter Frampton. The record took three years to finish. It was hard, but it was a lot of fun.

MD: What led you to the drums in the first place?

Jamie: I was about ten or eleven and wanted to play violin in the elementary school band because I had seen Jack Benny play it on TV. The teacher told me that chair was filled, so I said, "What about the trumpet?" She said, "All I have is a percussion spot." She handed me a rubber practice pad and a book and I went, "Uh oh."

I was having dinner with my folks that night and I said, "They didn't have any chairs open, so I'm the percussionist." My father's eyes lit up, and he got up, went back to his bedroom, and brought me a pair of drumsticks. "Here, these were mine when I went to aeronautical school in California. I was in the school band and played drums." And then he said, "You're



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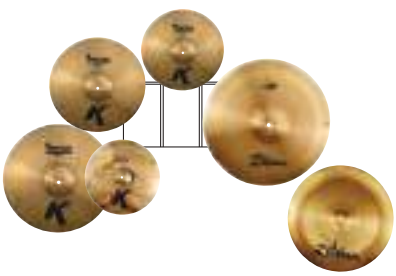


14" K Custom Dark HiHats
18" K Dark Crash Thin
16" K Dark Crash Thin
15" K Dark Crash Thin
21" A Sweet Ride
17" K Custom Dark China

going to listen to this," and he pulled out a John Philip Sousa marching record and *Live At Carnegie Hall* by Benny Goodman with Gene Krupa, Lionel Hampton, and Teddy Wilson. He said, "Listen to this. Krupa is the greatest drummer ever. I got a chance to see him right in front of the stage in California and I sat right in front of the bass drum." Gene is still my favorite drummer in the world. I'm actually a member of the Gene Krupa fan club.

MD: Did you have any lessons?

Jamie: I never had a lesson in my life. I listened to a tremendous amount of music and I played to all of it in my room.

MD: What was the break?

Jamie: Eric was a big thing, obviously. But in high school, I went around town a lot and watched the older guys play, like Leon and Cale. I'd sneak into nightclubs or sit outside the door and listen.

MD: How did you find yourself in Leon's presence?

Jamie: I went on the road with Phil Driscoll, a trumpet player, and that was a great gig. And then in '72, we became part of Bob Seger's band and made a record called *Back In '72*, which had the original "Turn The Page" on it. I worked with Bob again in the mid '70s. I did a couple of tours with him, and then I was playing around town.

I was a big jazz fan, so I'd play a lot of that stuff with some very hip sax players. There was a little buzz around Tulsa at that time about the music scene there, because of Leon and Shelter Records. People like George Harrison were coming into town to record. Carl Radle, the bass player with the Shelter band, said, "You gotta go see this kid play." So Leon started coming out. He'd sit in the back of the club with his big long beard and I'd be so nervous. But he kept coming back, and it went on for a while. Finally his manager came and said, "Leon wants you to come over to his house." I was a twenty-year-old kid. I was petrified.

I went over to Leon's house and he played me a whole lot of Gospel stuff and material he had recorded with George Harrison. I was in awe. He was looking for a rhythm section to work at the Shelter Studio in Tulsa, and he wanted me to be a part of it. I joined that operation for a while, but I think we were so young that we didn't know what to do with all the stuff he gave us. I think we did more partying and hanging out late at night than we did making any records.

MD: What did you know about recording at that point?

Jamie: He had engineers there, but I didn't know anything about recording. We learned how to do it by doing it. Leon was such a stickler for time, so that was always a big issue. He liked my playing because my time was good.

MD: Did you do anything specific as a kid to work on time?

Jamie: No. Luckily it was just built in. Years later I had a really easy time with drum machines. I was petrified of them at first. I was kind of anti-machine, but then I got comfortable with them, and I've learned over the years how they can be your friend. A lot of drummers go in with the attitude that the machine is their enemy. But if, while you're recording, you think of it as another guy playing in the other room, it's great.

Carl Radle, who was in Derek & The Dominos with Eric, sent some cassette tapes of me and Dickie Simms to Eric. A year went by. And then, two weeks before we were to go back on the road with Leon, Carl called and said, "Eric just called. He's

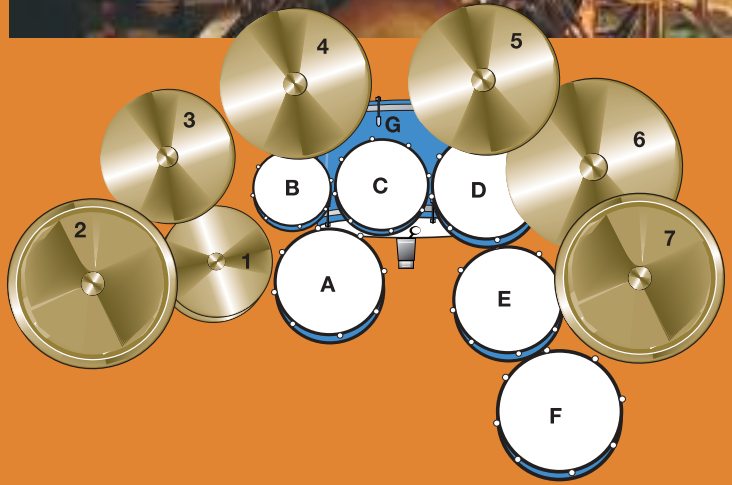
Jamie's Drums

(Live setup different from studio kit shown in photo.)

Drums: Yamaha Maple Custom in turquoise maple finish (endorser for thirty-two years)
A. 5½x14 maple snare
B. 7½x10 rack tom
C. 8x12 rack tom
D. 10x14 rack tom
E. 14x14 floor tom
F. 16x16 floor tom
G. 16x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian (endorser since the company started in '81)
1. 14" AA Sizzle hats
2. 18" HH Chinese
3. 16" HHX Evolution crash with rivets
4. 18" AA medium crash
5. 18" HH medium crash
6. 21" El Sabor ride
7. 18" HH Chinese with rivets

Percussion: Rhythm Tech tambourine and shakers
Hardware: Yamaha, including an FP 850 bass drum pedal with a felt beater (medium spring tension)
Heads: Remo coated Ambassador on snare batter with Ambassador snare-side, clear Ambassadors on tops and bottoms of toms (tape on bottom heads), clear Pinstripe on bass drum batter with black Yamaha on front with hole (foam inside drum for muffling)
Sticks: Regal Tip 5B model (hickory with wood tip)
Electronics: Yamaha DTXTREME



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Jamie with guitar legend and old friend Eric Clapton.

been playing to those cassette tapes in front of his fireplace at his house for months, and he said, 'Get those kids and bring them to Miami to make this record.'" I paced around, a nervous wreck, and finally talked to Leon and told him. He said, "If it had been anyone else besides Eric, I'd be upset. But Eric is getting off his drug addiction and he needs to get back to work and do something, so go." Apparently Leon didn't mean it, though, because he's still mad. Anyway, I flew to Miami and did *461 Ocean Boulevard* with Eric. It was a great experience.

MD: Tell us what you remember about recording that album.

Jamie: It was done fast—in two weeks. Tom Dowd produced that record, and we came into the studio where Eric had already been working for a couple of days. We lived in the house, rehearsing and playing together. We'd go to the studio at night and we'd stay there forever.

The first night we jammed around a little bit and the guitar player, George Cherry, who worked at Criteria, brought this cassette to Tom Dowd, who put the tape in and said, "We're going to cut this song by some guy down in Jamaica called Bob Marley." At that time, reggae music hadn't made it any further north than Miami. So we cut "I Shot The Sheriff," which put Bob Marley on the map.

MD: How did you approach reggae?

Jamie: When you're a kid, you kind of play it the way you want to play it and not copy the record. You listen to stuff and then you interpret it with all the things in your playing. That's how you become your own player.

Reggae music is really something you're born into, just like being a New Orleans drummer. Those guys, it's in their blood. Those two styles are probably the hardest to copy, so I stay away from them. And I was never in the mode of competing with other drummers. I felt I was a good player, but not a great player. Gene Krupa and Elvin Jones are great drummers. I'm a good one.

MD: What do you think your assets are?

Jamie: I've got really good ears. I'm very well schooled in song context, especially for radio. I know how to make radio records. You can be a showoff if you want or you can make records for radio. I knew you couldn't make any money playing jazz. I played a few gigs with Eddie Harris in Tulsa a few times and he told me, "You guys are playing the unemployment music. How do you think you're going to make any money playing it?" But I loved playing jazz because it's free.

I chose to play radio format records. And my time is one of my assets. In the late '70s I did that thing for The Bee Gees where they measured drummers' beats. Gadd, Porcaro, and I were called down to Miami to do this experiment Barry Gibb was doing with Albhy Galuten. Drum machines weren't really out at the time. Roger Linn had the LM1, which was kind of stiff. So Barry Gibb and the brothers had this idea to find the best drummers they knew of who had the best time, and they put us in the studio and played the song we were going to record and then we assembled the drum part, beat by beat. They'd measure the impacts on the tape, which had to be within nine milliseconds to be acceptable. I got them in six. They had a mechanical arm that they had made that they could trigger, and it would hit the snare drum and create a human feel. The pay was great, and we stayed in great hotels in Miami. But after every session we all were in the bar, drinking as much as we could as fast as we could.

MD: Are you on the record?

Jamie: I don't even know if the record ever came out. I think on the *Spirits Having Flown* record, they may have used one track, but I remember talking to Albhy about it and I think it ended up being a half-million-dollar experiment that they ended up mostly throwing in the garbage. It was the most insane thing I ever did, except maybe going out with Ace Frehley, which was pretty insane too.

MD: What year was that?

Jamie: That was in the late '80s. I took Anton Fig's place when he left to do Letterman.

MD: What was crazy about that?

Jamie: That was just a different side of the music industry, which I wanted to experience. I had never been on a heavy metal tour. I had seen *Spinal Tap,* and the experience with Ace was exactly like that movie—no one knows where the gigs are, everything's a mess, everything is always breaking, there are all these stupid little sets that look really dumb, that incoherent kind of thing. But Ace is a great guitar player. The music was a lot of fun actually.

We did a tour by ourselves and also one with Iron Maiden. One night I was sitting behind Nicko McBrain, talking to him *while* he was playing, and he said, "Watch this," and he got up and stopped playing. The other guys were so loud that they just kept on playing. He said, "They don't even know I'm not there!"

MD: Who did you most enjoy working with and why?

Jamie: Eric, for the creativity that we were allowed and the closeness of the way we were treated in the band. It was a great operation. Eric wanted to be in a *band*. He didn't choose to be "Eric Clapton." He wanted to be a guitar player in a band. His

thoughts were that when Jimi Hendrix died, it put a tag around his neck that he didn't want.

MD: You've had a history of working with great guitar players—Clapton and Frampton.

Jamie: I love working with guitar players, especially Englishmen. They phrase and play differently. They hear things differently.

MD: What about working with Seger?

Jamie: He liked my groove. Musicians tell me I'm comfortable to play with. Hey, that's my job. I'm not a fancy player, but it's my job to make *their* job easier.

MD: What did Peter Frampton need from you?

Jamie: Peter liked the groove too. That's how he found me. When he had his car accident in the Bahamas, he was in a body cast. He heard "Lay Down Sally" on the radio and said, "Whoever that is, I want that guy in the band." His manager found me.

That was another case of going straight into an ongoing tour. I listened to the songs and winged it until I really knew them. It was the same thing with Eric when he called me back in '83 in the middle of his tour. I went back with him until the end of '86 after doing his *Behind The Sun* record with Phil Collins. The song "She's Waiting" has me on drums. I only mentioned that because, I've read reviews where it's said, "Phil Collins played great on that song." [laughs] Oh, well.

Oldaker Gold

Recordings

Artist	Album
Eric Clapton	461 Ocean Boulevard
Eric Clapton	Slowhand
Eric Clapton	Backless
Eric Clapton	Behind The Sun
Eric Clapton	Crossroads
Eric Clapton	Crossroads 2
Jamie Oldaker	Mad Dogs & Okies
Eric Clapton	Time Pieces
Eric Clapton	Time Pieces, Vol. 2
The Tractors	The Tractors
Ace Frehley	Frehley's Comet
Eric Clapton	Blues

Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
Benny Goodman	Live At Carnegie Hall	Gene Krupa
Miles Davis	Kind Of Blue	Jimmy Cobb
Joe Cocker	Mad Dogs & Englishmen	Jim Keltner, Jim Gordon, Chuck Blackwell
James Brown	Live At The Apollo	Jabo Starks, Clyde Stubblefield
Original Soundtrack	8 Mile	various
Pink Floyd	The Division Bell	Nick Mason, Gary Wallis
Tony Williams	Tony Williams Lifetime	Tony Williams
John Coltrane	Lush Life	Louis Hayes, Albert "Tootie" Heath

MD: What couple of tracks are you the proudest of from your body of work, and what did you do on them?

Jamie: "Wonderful Tonight" is one of my favorites. I watched Eric write it, for one thing. I played a double-time part on the hi-hat with a half-time snare drum part. Eric just started playing the song and I jumped in. There weren't charts or anything. We just came up with our parts ourselves.

For that part, I played the 16th notes on the hi-hat with my right hand. I played the "&"s on the hi-hat and the backbeat on the snare with my left. A lot of drummers have asked me about it because they try to do it with alternate sticking. It doesn't feel right that way.

People also ask me about the break in "I Shot The Sheriff," which sounds out of time. That was actually a mistake, a bad tape edit. People try to count it, but you can't. Glyn Johns did a tape splice on it in the wrong place. Drummers have been struggling for years to count that organ break, but can't count it. There *is* no count.

MD: What are your future plans?

Jamie: I have my own label now. The *Mad Dogs & Oakies* record was put out on Mint Blue Island Records. Concord distributed it for me. I still retain all the ownership of the masters and videos. I have a production company, and I'm in the process of looking for new acts that I believe have a place in the market. I'm very excited about it.

MD Radio **To hear tracks from Jamie, go to www.moderndrummer.com.**

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"I can't stress warming up enough. It's an important part of my routine and I think it should be done by anybody who's going to go out on stage and play drums."

— *Jason Bittner*

"Develop a good sense of time because it makes it easier to manipulate and emphasize the spaces between the notes... and that effects the feel dramatically."

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Chad Smith

"Everybody's into the double bass thing and everybody wants to know how I got so fast. The only way to get fast is to practice. There's no 'cheat code' to figure it out."

— Chris Adler

"The first step to playing drum & bass is the first step to getting into any style of music: you have to listen to it and expose yourself to it... I'm not trying to imitate a machine. I'm trying to open doors so something new can happen.

— JoJo Mayer

"The key to developing a good groove is to really understand what your role is as a drummer. For me, my role is to play for the song, not for myself."

— Zoro

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Luis de Miguel

Peter Erskine

A Jazz Life...And More

by Rick Mattingly

Peter Erskine's primary occupation is and always has been "jazz musician." The bulk of his recorded legacy (over 400 albums) can be found with such artists as Stan Kenton, Maynard Ferguson, Weather Report, Steps Ahead, John Abercrombie, Gary Burton, Bass Desires, Kenny Werner, Bob Mintzer, Diana Krall, and a dozen or so albums under his own name.

Still, Erskine has done his share of pop-oriented projects, with such artists as Steely Dan, Joni Mitchell, Elvis Costello, and Kate Bush. And he's appeared on film soundtracks ranging from the three Austin Powers flicks to the recent *Memoirs Of A Geisha*.

Although Peter started playing professionally at eighteen, it took him a while to get comfortable in the studio. "When I first recorded with Kenton and Maynard, live albums were no problem," Peter says. "But I had *no* idea how to focus my playing for the studio, in terms of ideas or dynamics. If playing poorly on albums were a crime, I'd be phoning this interview in from Sing-Sing. Fortunately, I eventually began to understand the art of playing for the microphone, to the point where I'm now very comfortable in most recording situations.

Erskine has been putting albums out on his own label, Fuzzy Music, for the past decade. "We called it Fuzzy Music because I had been reading about Fuzzy Logic," Peter explains. "The name kind of dictated a mission statement: We will make the kind of recordings that we want to make, without worrying if they fit into an established category. I just wanted to be able to document some of my musical adventures as they were occurring."

Weather Report
8:30, 1979

This was the first recording I made that I felt sounded really good. My favorite track is a studio cut we did of Wayne Shorter's "Sightseeing." That was the kind of recording I used to dream about making someday. I think it captured the band at a pretty good moment.

In the case of "Birdland," Joe Zawinul told me, "I don't dig that bossa nova beat. Play something else." So I tried playing a variation of the Jeff Porcaro shuffle, except I played the bass drum shuffle pattern all the way through. It was a real test of endurance to play that thing at the end of a two-hour-plus show. That band was pretty loud on stage, and we played it at a fairly brisk tempo.

Steps Ahead
Modern Times, 1984

Steps started off as a bebop "kicks" group, with Steve Gadd on drums. When Steve's schedule made it difficult for him to continue playing with them, I was invited to join. So I left Weather Report to see if I could make it as a jazz musician in New York.

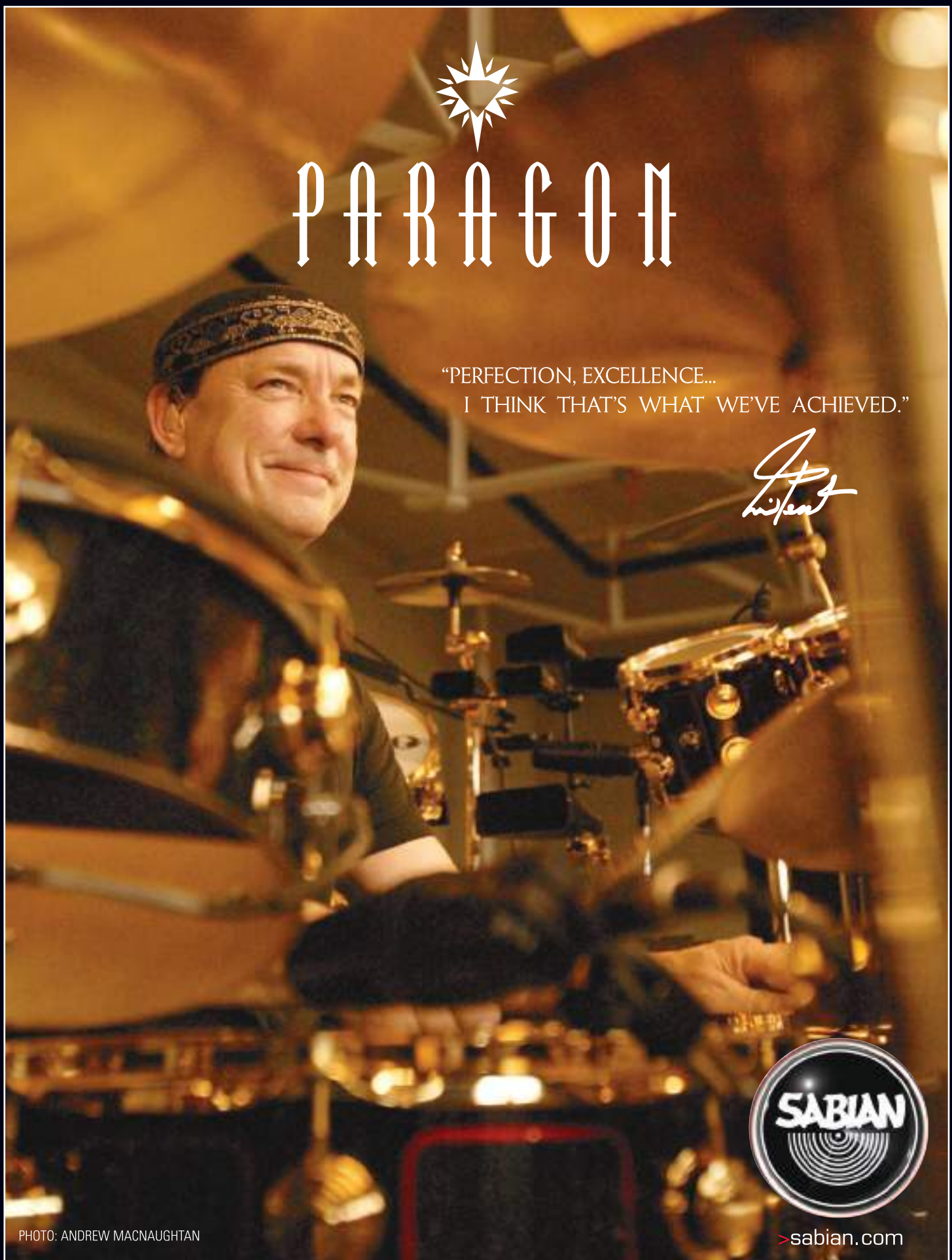
The band quickly evolved from playing bebop to integrating synthesizers and sequencers. With *Modern Times* I really thought Steps came of age. I liked the way we used the sounds and technology.

Sessions for the Steps albums would go until dawn, day after day. Shortly after that, I began doing more recordings where two days was the norm for recording an album. Instead of being like a posed studio portrait, those albums are more like nice snapshots. That's the way I prefer working on records to this day.

Peter Erskine
Motion Poet, 1988

Motion Poet is my favorite album for a number of reasons. It introduced the incredible writing of Vince Mendoza to the world. And I love the way the other musicians play on it. Michael and Randy Brecker, Bob Mintzer, Eliane Elias, Jim Beard, Marc Johnson, John Abercrombie—it's a great band.

"Dream Clock" was a loving tribute to Weather Report, and to the memory of Jaco Pastorius. My ballad, "Not A Word," came from a score I wrote for a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The last tune, "In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Walked Maya," is the John Abercrombie Trio, which I was a member of at that time with Marc Johnson. I wrote that tune the day my daughter was born.

Peter Erskine
Sweet Soul, 1991

I like *Sweet Soul* because I was starting to write more at the time. We had played the title tune in Marc Johnson's group, Bass Desires, with John Scofield and Bill Frisell. "To Be Or Not To Be" came from the music I wrote for a production of *Hamlet* at the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco. Writing incidental music for theater was my primary composing outlet for several years.

My favorite track on that album is "Touch Her Soft Lips And Part." It's just a simple 3/4 ballad, and I'm playing brushes. You can barely hear me—which is probably why I like it so much.

Peter Erskine
You Never Know, 1992

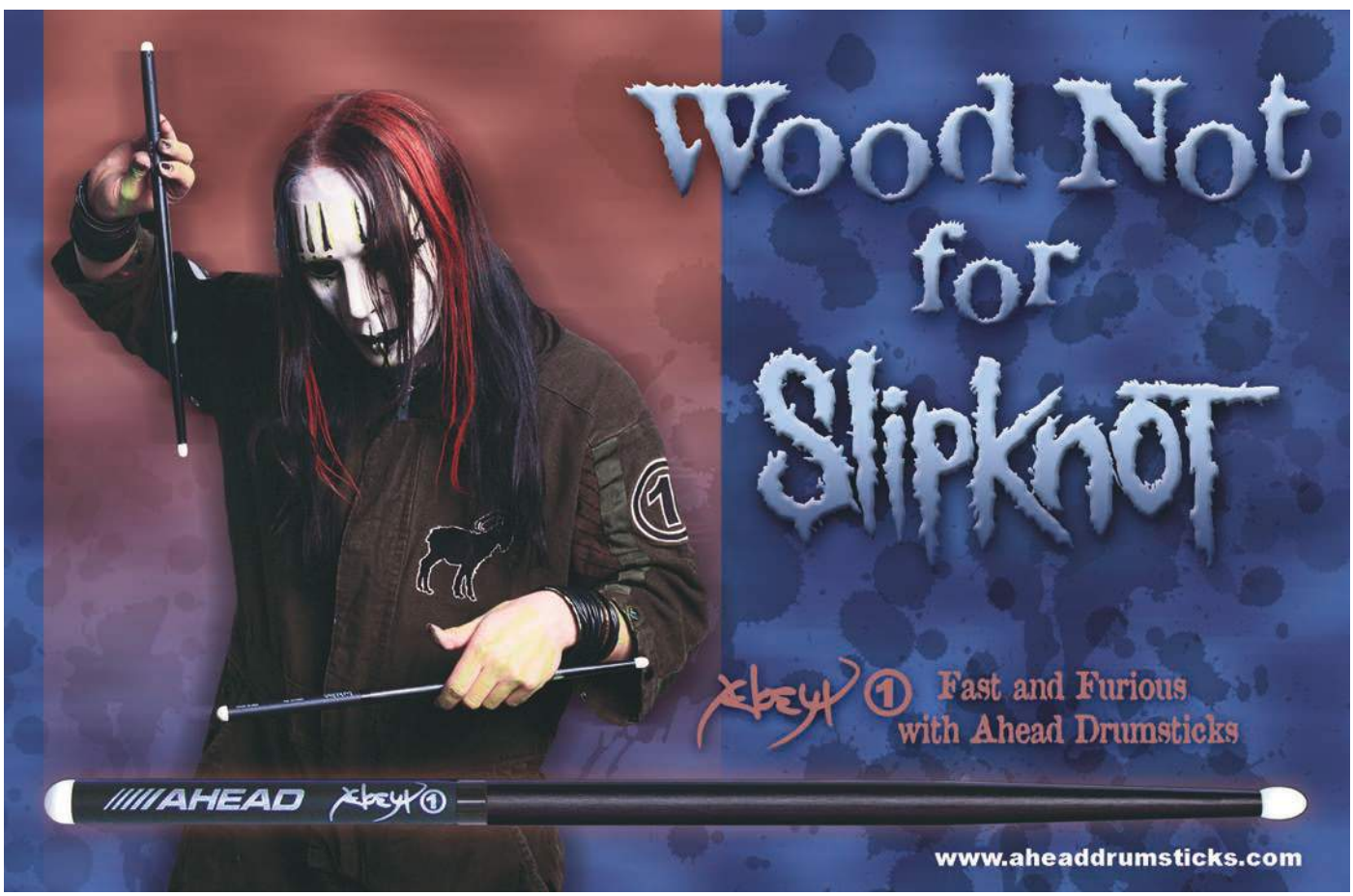
This was the first album for my ECM trio, with John Taylor on piano and Palle Danielsson on bass. I was tired of the typical formula where everybody plays the head, then everybody takes a solo, everybody tries to be amazing…. That's boring. I wanted to explore the idea of building and releasing tension in a horizontal way, as opposed to the usual vertical arc. If you do it more horizontally, the peaks and valleys are very different. The rewards are great if you can pull it off.

The first tune, "New Old Age," is interesting if you think of this as a "drummer's album," because I never play the bass drum! The tune is in 9/8, and it has a hypnotic ostinato drone that develops into the song. The entire album has a very specific tone to it. You can't hope for much more than that.

Joni Mitchell
Both Sides Now, 2000

Both Sides Now is one of my all-time "I'm proud of" records. I first worked with Joni on her *Mingus* album in 1978. I hadn't seen her for a long time since. Then Don Henley produced a concert of divas singing standards with a symphony orchestra. Joni took part, and as a result of that she decided to do a whole album of standards. We recorded at George Martin's Air Studios in London.

When you're steering an eighty-piece orchestra and you're not using a click track, the tendency is to remind players where "1" is. Well, if you're working with a vocalist who's singing a song with tenderness in the lyrics, and you come in with a downbeat on the bass drum, it really sounds like a bull in a china shop. After I heard a playback of the first tune, I realized that I had to give time and tempo



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reminders in open spaces, where there would be no conflict with the vocals or with an orchestral passage. I had to find ways to keep things moving without being too obvious.

Mark-Anthony Turnage
Fractured Lines, 2002

This is a double percussion concerto, featuring Evelyn Glennie and me with the BBC symphony at the Royal Albert Hall. That launched a whole other career for me: guest-soloing with symphony orchestras, but not playing pop stuff. It's pretty challenging music. I'm primarily playing drumset, and Evelyn is primarily playing marimba, but we both exchange licks on a Yamaha Steve Jordan cocktail kit. I also play some timbales and bongos. There's a lot of written stuff, but also some improvised moments. It was good fun.

Bob Mintzer Big Band
Gently, 2003

When I was a kid I used to listen to Bernard Purdie and think, "That was a perfect drum track." I felt the same way listening to Jeff Porcaro, Osie Johnson, Don Lamond, and Mel Lewis. When it came to playing ensemble music in a studio, these were my heroes. The second track of this album, "Timeless," is the one time that I feel I set foot in that pantheon. It's probably my best recorded performance ever. The choices I made fit perfectly with the choices everyone else was making.

I've gotten to do a lot of stuff, but big band is ultimately my favorite. I really enjoy navigating ensemble music. The role that the drums play really fascinates me. Sure, there can be moments of individual brilliance, but that's not the end goal for me. I'm more interested in working with the shape, nudging it here and there, and trying to make it sparkle a bit.

Kate Bush
Arial, 2005

Kate hired me after she saw a BBC documentary of me working with an orchestra. I was familiar with her from the Peter Gabriel recording "Don't Give Up," but I didn't realize how big a star she was. There was a lot of secrecy involved with the sessions; I couldn't tell anybody where we were working. Still, Kate was one of the nicest people I've ever worked with—incredibly down to earth. She kept bringing us tea.

During those sessions I felt as if we were in the midst of something important. I'm really quite touched by some of that music.

Lounge Art Ensemble
Music For Moderns, 2005

The Lounge Art Ensemble bases new tunes on old standards, with titles that refer back to the original. For example, "Did It Have To Be You?" is based on "It Had To Be You"; "Worth The Wait" is based on "Just In Time."

I love playing with [saxophonist] Bob Sheppard and [bassist] Dave Carpenter. Playing in a trio without a chordal instrument providing the constant harmony and rhythmic accompaniment is more work, but it's the freest form of playing. Having no piano allows the drums to become part of the harmonic action. There's more room for the drums to do things.

MD Radio **To hear Peter with the Lounge Art Ensemble, go to www.moderndrummer.com.**

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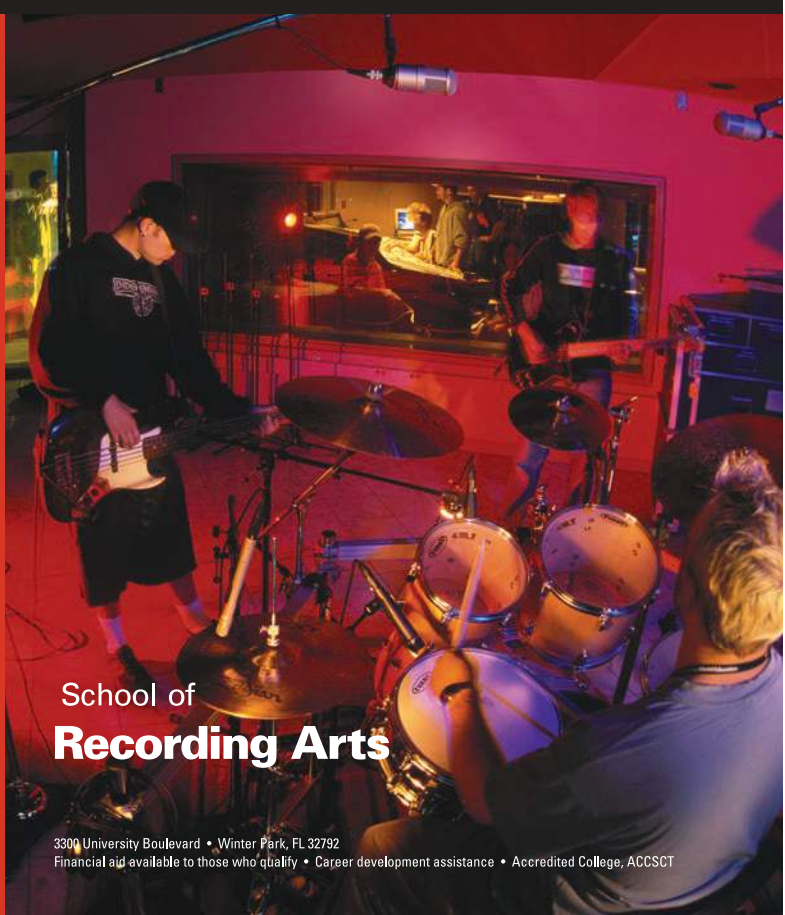

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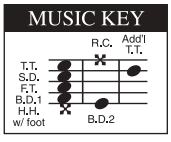
Style & Analysis

Ginger Baker

Live In Madison Square Garden, 2005

by Howard Fields



Here's Cream 101 for those of you who have not had the pleasure of enjoying Ginger Baker's drumming on the four classic Cream LPs, *Fresh Cream*, *Disraeli Gears*, *Wheels Of Fire*, and *Goodbye*. These albums were recorded between 1966 and 1968 and were monstrously creative works conceived during the highly inspired musical climate of swinging London.

The powerhouse trio of Baker, bassist Jack Bruce, and guitarist Eric Clapton ventured into uncharted territories, blazing a trail that incorporated extended improvisational passages within the body of their songs. While this concept was common in jazz, it had never been explored extensively in a rock environment. However, Baker and Bruce weren't foreign to improvisation. Both were veterans of London's modern jazz and R&B scene. And when Eric Clapton, fresh out of a gig with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, became Baker's choice as guitar player, an ultra-stellar lineup was set. And the tag "supergroup" was coined.

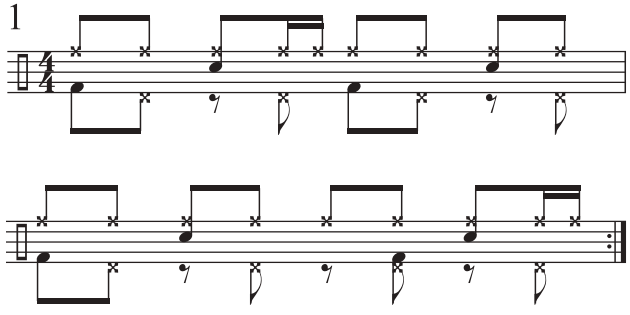
The songs Cream played were either intensified re-workings of classic blues tunes, or brilliant original pop songs. Regardless of which type of song was pursued, Cream was always willing to take the song to an improvisational arena previously unimagined. This approach was ultimately what made the band a success. Unfortunately, the life span of Cream was short, with their final show occurring on November 26, 1968 at London's Royal Albert Hall.

Given their towering legacy, the Cream fans who entered Madison Square Garden on October 24, 2005 for the first of the band's three reunion concerts did so with great excitement and anticipation. This was the first time in thirty-seven years (since their 1968 farewell show in the same venue) that many had seen Ginger play. When I arrived at my seat, I was delighted to find myself directly to the drummer's right and about forty feet from the drumkit, giving me an excellent view of Baker and his feet.

"I'm So Glad"

From the first note, it was apparent that this was a more laid-back, controlled, and less frenetic Ginger Baker. During the guitar solo, the intense nonstop sticking and pounding double bass that were characteristic of Ginger's playing thirty-five years earlier (as on the live version of "I'm So Glad" from *Goodbye*), were dramatically altered. This version involved right-hand 8ths on the ride cymbal (with a few 8th/16th/16th figures thrown in), sparse 8th-note bass drum patterns, and an upbeat left-foot hi-hat. The following pattern shows what Ginger played during their opening number. (By the way, the 2005 *Cream: Royal Albert Hall* DVD is an excellent testimony to all the observations noted herein.)

1



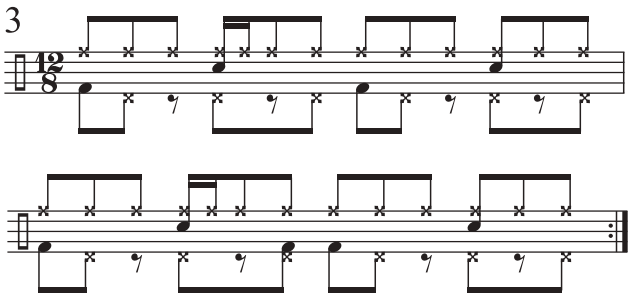
The beat played in Example 1 was typical of the songs that gravitated toward mid-tempo straight-8th grooves, including "Outside Woman Blues," "Tales Of Brave Ulysses," "Badge," "Politician," "Born Under A Bad Sign," and a calmer, more down-home version of "Crossroads."

"Stormy Monday"

Cream's slow 12/8 blues selections were a vital part of their '60s performances, and the reunion concert hearkened back to that style. The only "new" song that the band performed at the reunion show was the classic blues "Stormy Monday," which Ginger treated tastefully. In the first verse, Baker used delicate buzz rolls in the following manner.

2

During the second verse, a 12/8 pattern emerged that would also be used in the other slow-blues tunes of the evening, "Sleepy Time Time" and "Sitting On Top Of The World." This pattern consisted of 8ths on the ride (with a few 16th figures thrown in) and sparse bass drum patterns. The striking element of this pattern was the left-foot hi-hat part, which was played consistently on every other 8th note (beginning on the second 8th note of each bar). Here's the pattern.

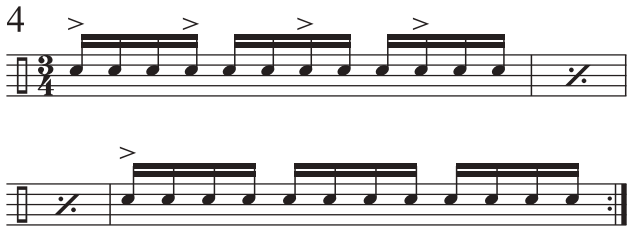


Ginger's approach to slow-blues drumming back in the heyday of Cream is a completely different story. Listen back to "Sleepy Time Time" and "Sitting On Top Of The World" found on the *Live Cream* and *Goodbye* LPs, respectively, and notice all the 32nd-note fills played around the set. There are also many double bass passages that are countered with syncopated snare cracks and cymbal hits. This was not the case at the New York show.

"Deserted Cities Of The Heart"

After the dissolution of Cream and the extremely short-lived Blind Faith project in 1969, Ginger Baker immersed himself in African drumming. He even moved to Nigeria and became involved with a variety of African-influenced projects. Most notable are the LPs *Stratavarious* and *Live*, recorded with Fela Ransome-Kuti.

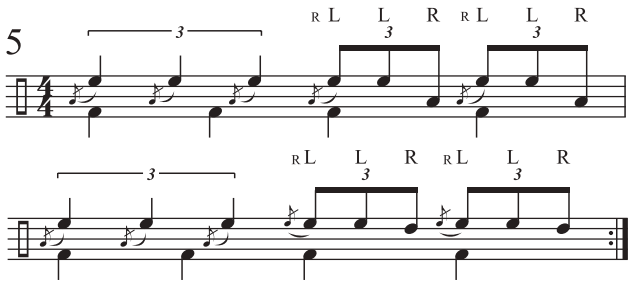
At the reunion concert in Madison Square Garden, it was interesting to hear Ginger's African influence in a setting that most would think unsupportive of such a style. On "Deserted Cities Of The Heart," Baker played a heavily African-influenced tom-tom pattern. This occurred during the eight-bar bridge of the song. Back in 1968, Ginger treated this bridge with accented 16th note fills, as indicated in Example 4.



Example 5 contains the African pattern Baker played during this section at the reunion concert. (This type of pattern, usually written in 6/8, is notated in 4/4 to coordinate with the rest of the song.)

The most interesting aspect of this groove was how it rubbed against the guitar and bass parts. The resulting tension created an eclectic and exciting new feel for the song.

The same African pattern was used on the lengthy rideout of "Sunshine Of Your Love." Back in the day, this song was a vehicle for Ginger to pound out double bass 16ths, ride the crash cymbals, and smash the snare and toms. But on this night, the Afro 6/8 pattern took over, creating an interesting diversion from what was expected.



"Toad"

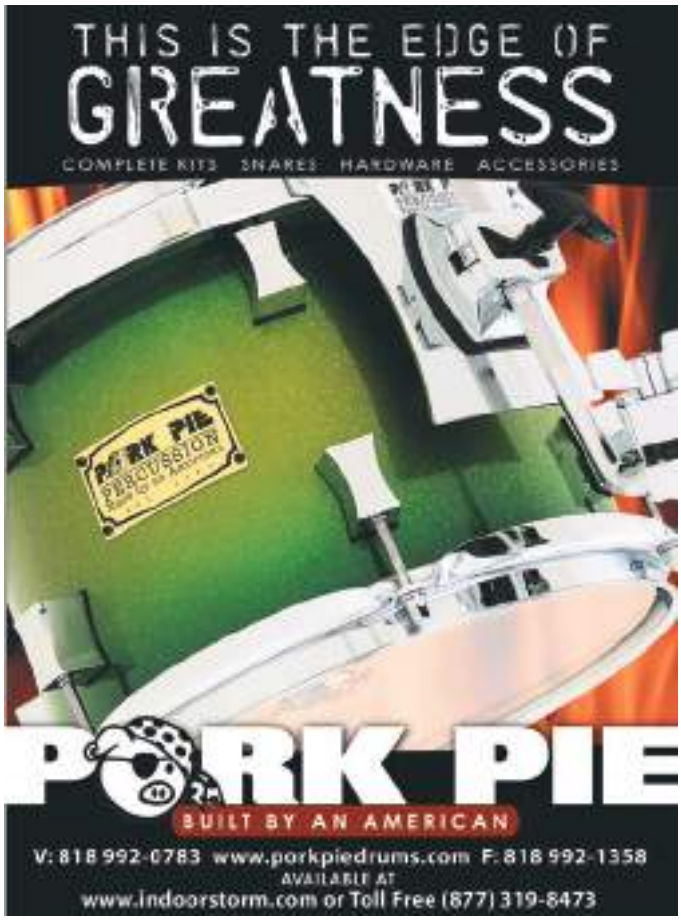
The African pattern also permeated Ginger's signature piece, "Toad." In the '60s, as is chronicled on the original *Fresh Cream* studio track, the live *Wheels Of Fire* recording, and 1968's Royal Albert Hall *Cream: Farewell Concert* DVD, Ginger *always* began his solo with accented 16ths on the snare over a bed of double bass. This opening created a beautiful cacophony of percussive sound that was pure Ginger Baker, and was what earned him widespread admiration throughout the drumming community. But on the night of the reunion concert, he based the entire first half of his eight-minute solo on the African tom pattern.

The remaining four minutes of the solo were pure jazz. Ginger played straight-ahead swing on the ride cymbal while building a beautiful, relaxed dialog between the kick and snare. For most of this section, his left foot kept 2 and 4 on the hi-hat, with a few left-foot bass drum excursions. (There are some excellent close-ups of this on the 2005 Albert Hall DVD.)

Above all, the most significant characteristic of the 2005 "Toad" solo is how Ginger dispensed with much of what made him a drumming icon, instead drawing from his pre-Cream jazz experience and his post-Cream relationship with African rhythms.

"Rollin' And Tumblin'"

A great moment for drummers during Cream's '60s performances was Ginger's train beat on Jack Bruce's harmonica piece "Traintime." Unfortunately, that song was excluded from the reunion concerts. But the band played a similar feel on "Rollin'



Rock Perspectives

And Tumblin'." On the original *Fresh Cream* and *Live Cream* LPs, this track was treated with a basic two-beat hi-hat/snare/kick pattern. On this night, Baker launched into a powerful train beat that drove the song beautifully. Check it out on the DVD.

It would be an omission not to mention two more characteristics of Ginger's style that remain in his playing today. First, Ginger still plays his ultra-wide flams on beat 4 (the type of flams our drum teachers always told us *not* to play) to kick off sections of songs. "Tales Of Brave Ulysses" and "White Room" both benefited from Ginger's two-fisted pickups. These powerful rudiments sounded amazing as they thundered through Madison Square Garden.

The other element that remains a part of Baker's vocabulary is the following classic lick. Baker usually plays this figure once or twice before the final crashing chord of a tune.

All in all, I couldn't have enjoyed the Cream reunion concert more. Ginger's playing on this night was a radical departure from his original '60s approach. Now his primary concern is to establish the groove and to complement the songs. But even though Ginger Baker circa 1968 may no longer be with us, his recent Cream performances left nothing to be desired.

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Make It Funky

18 Favorite Jazz/Funk Grooves

by Mike Clark

courtesy of Paiste

For this article, I want to share with you some original grooves that I've developed over the years and that I use whenever possible. They are out of my new method book, *Funk Drumming: Innovative Grooves And Advanced Concepts*.

Most of these grooves are 16th note–based, but a few of them use sextuplets. You may want to try breaking the patterns into quarter-note groupings to master the rhythms. Also, practice them slowly at first. Then work up the tempo.

Here are a few grooves that I used quite a bit back in the day with The Headhunters. (Check out Herbie Hancock's album *Thrust* to hear some of these patterns in action.)

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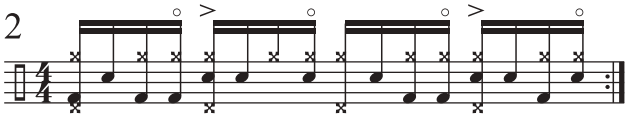
2



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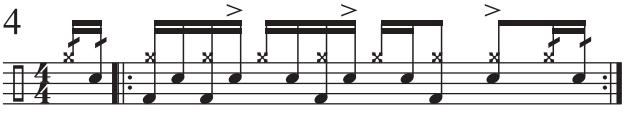
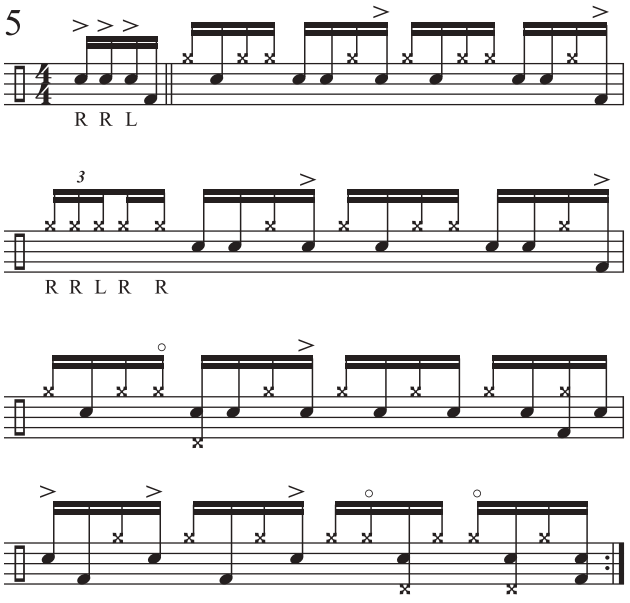


I love this next one; it's really funky. The bass drum is played on the "ah" of the beat. You can hear this groove on Headhunters bassist Paul Jackson's tune "Tip Toe From The Ghetto."

5



The next few examples are two-measure grooves. I like to mix these patterns together and change things up quite a bit. None of them are meant to be played verbatim. It's more important to get the grooves down and then do your own thing with them.

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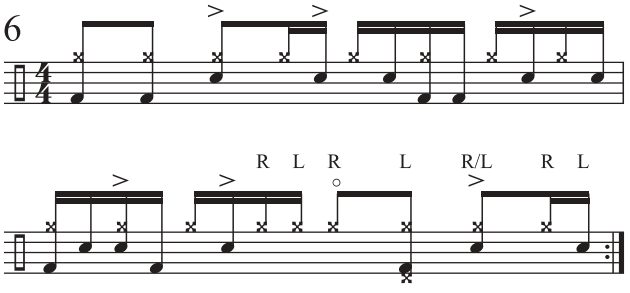
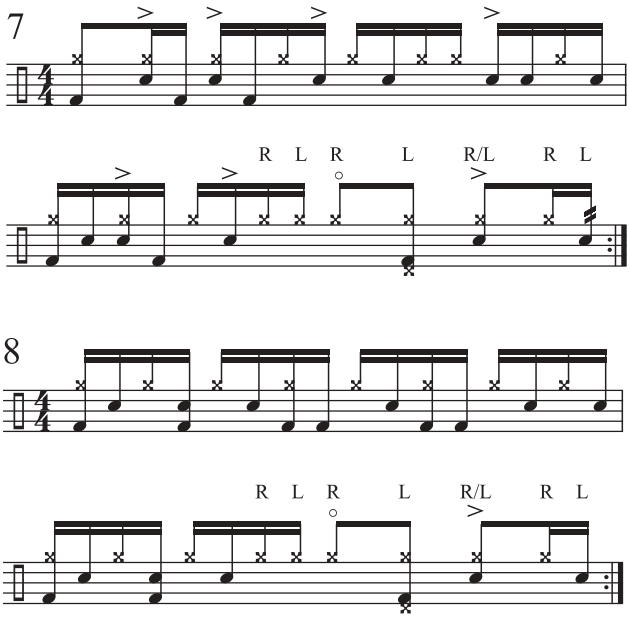
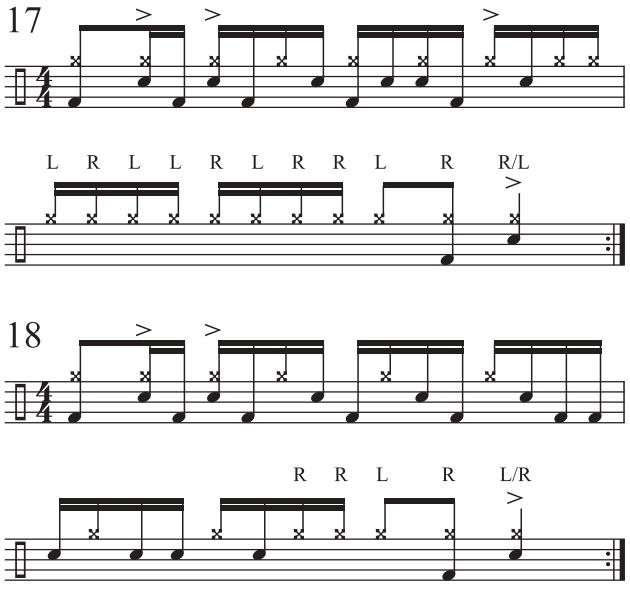




I guess I was one of the first guys to play jazz and funk in a linear style, or so the story goes. Below are some of my favorite linear grooves.

Since we're dealing with jazz and funk, here's some funk on the jazz tip.

I love the motion of funky music. Knowing when to play certain things (or when *not* to play them) is an art form that I find fascinating. It's like cooking: How you season things influences how funky it's going to taste. You don't want food to taste bland, and with the right spices it can be a memorable experience. That being said, here are two more funky grooves that I think you'll enjoy.

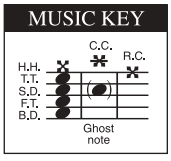


Mike Clark gained worldwide recognition as one of America's foremost jazz and funk drummers while playing with Herbie Hancock's Headhunters in the early 1970s. His book, Funk Drumming: Innovative Grooves & Advanced Concepts*, is available through Hal Leonard.*

A Musical Application Of Quintuplets

Part 1: How To Think About Them

by Ari Hoenig



Many of us hear the word "quintuplets" and immediately get scared or confused. For some, Indian music comes to mind. Others think it means playing a repeating pattern of five 8th notes over a tune in 4/4. Then there are those for whom the word evokes a vision of their doctor saying, "Well, the good news is that the infertility drugs worked...."

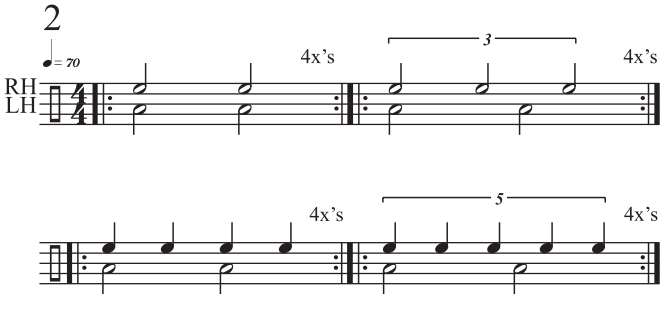
In musical terms, a quintuplet is a group of five notes played in the time normally occupied by two, three, or four notes. This means that in order to learn how to play quintuplets, we must first figure out how they fit over two notes.

The following polyrhythm is known as "five against two." For our purposes, let's put the metronome on half note = 56. The idea is to be able to play two half notes to the bar with the left hand while playing five quintuplets to the bar with the right. Both hands will meet up on beat 1 of each bar.

1

Another way to get this polyrhythm under control is to start by playing half notes with both hands. Then shift your right hand to start playing half-note triplets (three over two). From there, move on to quarter notes (four over two), and then quintuplets (five over two). All of these subdivisions should be played while keeping a consistent half-note pulse with your left hand. Play each bar at least four times before moving on to the next.

2

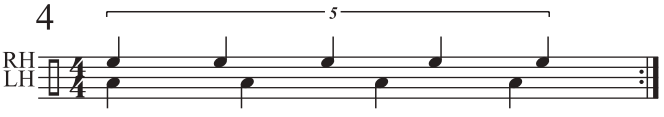


But what if you want to play the quintuplets on a gig without leading up to them? Eventually you'll learn the sound of a quintuplet just as you learned to hear triplets and 16th notes. Until then, here's a way to get fairly close to the quintuplet rhythm.

3

After you've played Example 3 a few times, go into Example 4 by evening out the top line (right hand) so it becomes an even five-note grouping against the four notes in the left hand. This exercise is only an approximation, but it will help you get familiar with the rhythm.

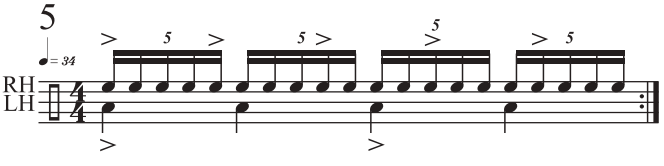
4



As you practice these exercises, try to hear the transition without relying on reading the page. Internalize it, and make it a part of you. You should go back and forth between Exercises 3 and 4 many times to hear the difference between them.

Now that you have a rough idea of how quintuplets sound, how do you know if you're fitting the five evenly over the four? One thing you can do is figure out what five over four looks like by fitting five notes into each quarter note and then grouping them in fours. Confused? Check this out.

5



The accented notes on the top indicate the five. The accented notes on the bottom indicate the two. (Hence, five over two.) If you accented all the quarter notes, it would be five over four.

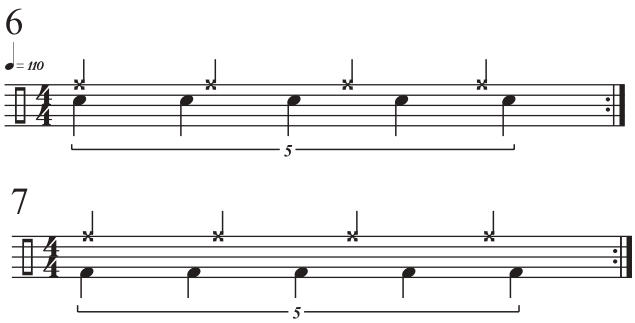
While looking at Example 5, ask yourself, How does the second note of the quintuplet relate to the quarter note I am already playing? You can see that it falls between the first and second quarter notes, but much closer to the second. Do this with the third through fifth notes of the quintuplet as well.

Keep in mind that when you play five over four you will start with four and put five over it, not the other way around. What's the difference? It affects how you think about the rhythm and how it relates to the form you're playing.

If you don't have the patience to start super slowly in order to play these examples correctly, don't worry. You don't have to think of quintuplets in mathematical terms to play them. These examples are simply to help you know how the quintuplets function, so you can relate the aural approach with the intellectual.

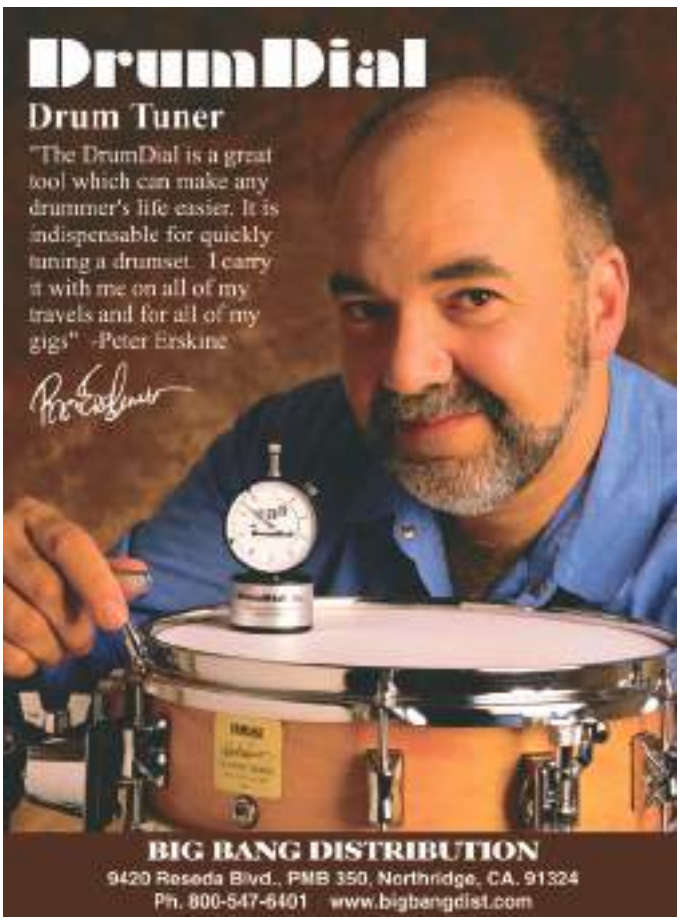
Once you've made it through the previous exercises, go back and reverse the hands so that the left hand plays the quintuplets and the right hand keeps the pulse. This will give you more options when applying these to the drumset.

Here are some basic ways you can use quintuplets in a musical way. Play the hi-hat with your left foot on all four beats in Exercises 6 and 7 so that it's played in unison with the ride cymbal.



In Part 2, we'll look at how to apply the quintuplet in a jazz context. See you then!

Ari Hoenig is a top New York jazz drummer. He currently works with Kenny Werner, Wayne Krantz, Jean-Michel Pilc, Chris Potter, and Kurt Rosenwinkel. Ari also leads his own band on Monday nights at New York City jazz club Smalls.

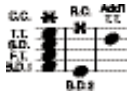


Playing With Loops

Keeping Current In Today's Musical Climate

by Donny Gruendler

MUSIC KEY



The most in-demand drummers have always focused on musical issues such as touch, tone, time, feel, and stylistic diversity. However, these techniques alone are no longer enough to ensure your success.

Many of today's biggest rock, pop, R&B, and hip-hop acts use loops, samples, and backing tracks to augment their performances. Therefore, in order to work, many high-profile touring and studio drummers are no longer ignoring the trend. Technology is here to stay. And rather than letting drum machines and loop-filled laptops get all the gigs, today's drummers are embracing these tools and making them an integral part of their sound.

Here we'll examine some methods for successfully playing with drum loops in today's most popular radio styles: rock, pop, R&B, and hip-hop. (You can download each loop example and demonstration track at www.moderndrummer.com.)

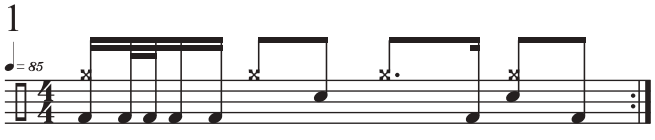
Constructing Drum Parts Over A Loop

The drummer is the backbone of any great band. As experts in rhythm, we have the enviable opportunity to color and shape the music. Just as your musical influences, drums, cymbals, and tuning help shape your sound, so can the use of loops. With that in mind, here are two things to consider when you sit down to groove with a loop.

1) Avoid bass drum "target practice."

Check out the following hip-hop loop (track 1).

1

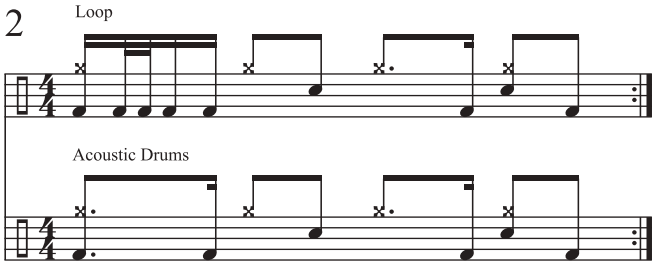


Notice that this loop contains several fast bass drum notes on beat 1. To be most effective, you should avoid playing every one. Not only will it be nearly impossible to line up with the feel of each note, but the groove will also sound sloppy.

Instead of mirroring the loop, play a few choice bass drum notes. The first and last notes of a phrase are the most important notes, so try playing the downbeat and the "ah" of beat 1. This will reinforce the loop without interfering with it.

Take a listen to hip-hop loop track 2 to hear how these two parts interact.

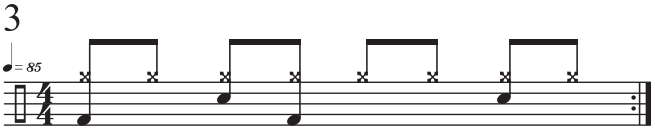
2



2) When in doubt, leave the hi-hat out.

Download and listen to R&B loop track 3.

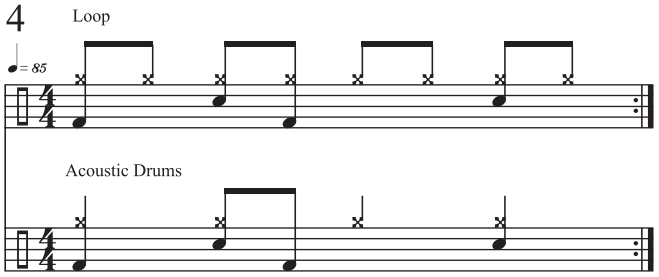
3



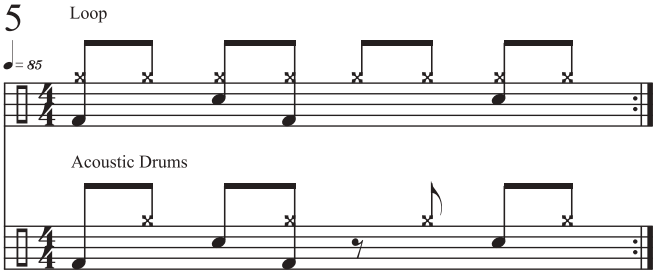
Notice that this loop has a laid-back snare and bass drum, combined with a stiff-sounding ahead-of-the-beat hi-hat pattern. Not many drummers can pull off this sort of feel. So what do you do? Do you try to mimic the loop with the exact hi-hat placement? The answer is no. As in Example 2, it's better to leave out the difficult hi-hat notes than risk playing them inaccurately.

Let's look at two options for playing with this loop. First, play quarter notes on the hi-hat over the snare and bass drum rhythm.

This version will allow the loop's stiff and edgy feel to come through your groove.



Now play offbeat 8th notes on the hi-hat. Again, this will allow the loop's stiff and edgy feel to be heard, but with a slightly different vibe.



Don't be intimidated if these ideas seem unfamiliar and awkward. It's important to realize that working with loops will be difficult at first. With practice, it'll become easier each day.

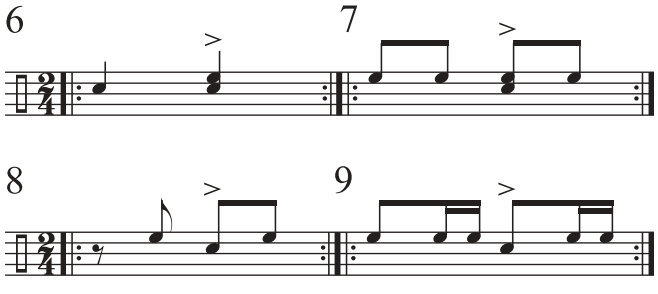
Fills: Keep The Momentum Going

Listen to any radio hit that uses loops and ask yourself, What makes this track groove and flow? The reason many artists use loops in their compositions is because loops add unwavering momentum to a track. As a drummer, you can't disrupt that momentum by playing inappropriate or busy fills.

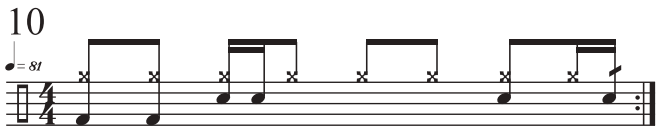
A loop is not a glorified metronome. You must give the listener the impression that you and the loop are one *huge* groove. In order to maintain that illusion, your fills should blend with the repetitive flavor of the loop.

So how can you blend with the loop and keep the momentum going when playing a transition fill? Well, what musical element is present in all types of commercial loops? The backbeat. Every time you fill, you should try to include the backbeat in some form.

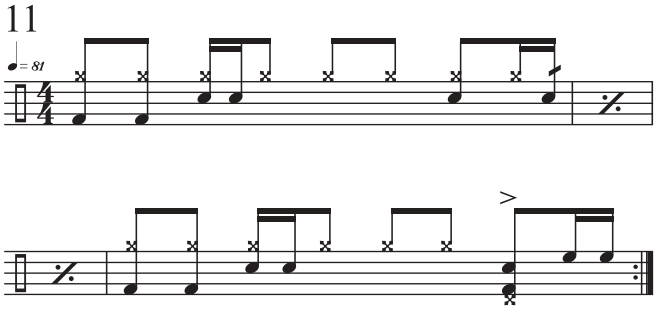
Below are four backbeat-based fill exercises that'll help you blend seamlessly with the loop. Feel free to move the high tom to any voice on the kit.



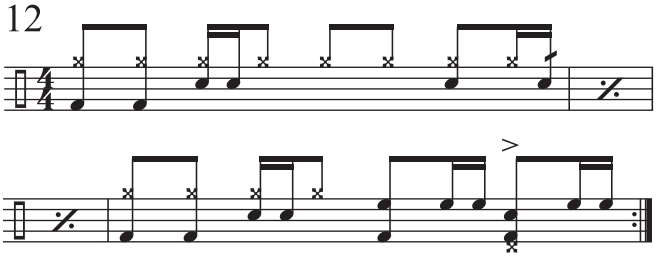
For the next few exercises, use the pop loop (track 4) in Example 10 to work on your fills. It's important to keep your fills short (one or two beats in length), as a longwinded fill will detract from the groove.



In Example 11, play three bars of time with the loop, then add a one-beat fill in measure four. This loop has a swing feel, so be sure to swing the 16ths in your fills.



Now follow the same procedure with a two-beat fill.



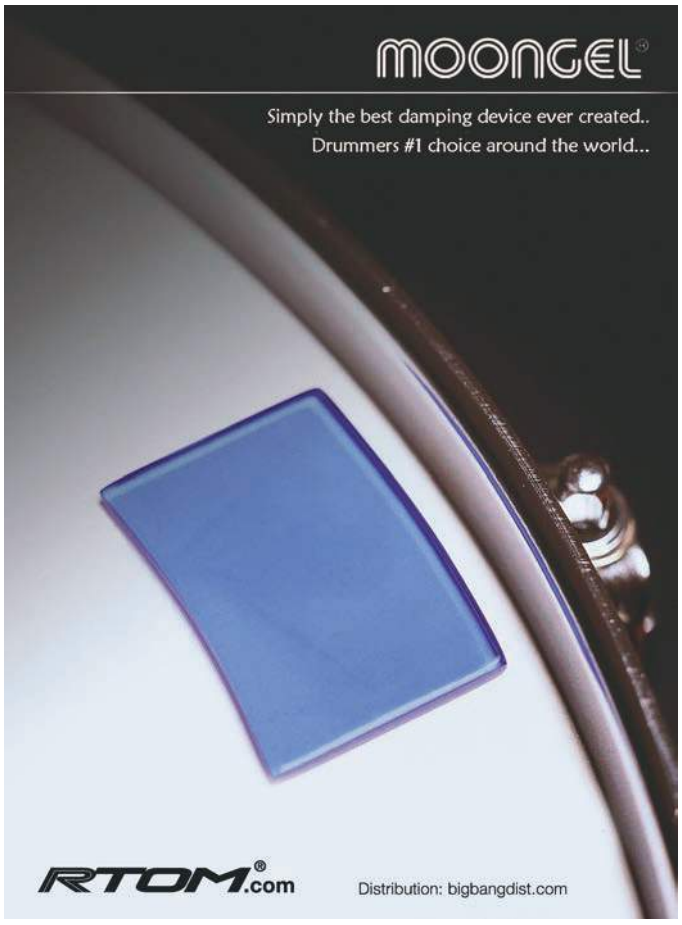
Do you notice that the main point of these exercises is still the groove? With these types of backbeat fills, you're able to play a tasty transition without disrupting the momentum of the loop.

Song Form Using Loops: The Radio Treatment

By now, you should understand how to groove and fill with loops. You also need to know how these loops function, so you can sound authentic when performing with them.

Most rock and pop recordings that use loops follow a similar arrangement style. I call this the "radio treatment." You can hear this approach on hit songs by artists such as Michelle Branch, Sheryl Crow, and Alanis Morissette.

In this format, the first verse is quiet, with a loop playing the groove. Then, out of nowhere, the acoustic drums enter into the chorus without a transition fill. This technique creates a huge dynamic and textural contrast between the two sections. It also adds energy and excitement to the song's most important section—the chorus.

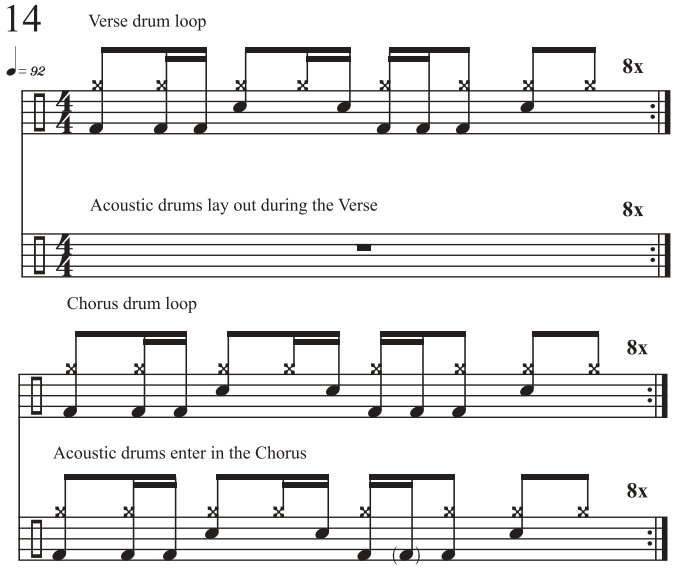


Rock 'N' Jazz Clinic

This sounds like a simple technique, right? Wrong. Think about what you do when you sit at your kit each day. How do you get warmed up for that first tasty groove? It is usually something like this.

The pick-up fill is the drummer's most overlooked habit. Until now, this has probably been an unnoticed routine that you use to lead smoothly into your grooves. However, when you're working with loops in the radio treatment form, the pick-up phrase will give away the texture and dynamic change between the verse and chorus, therefore nullifying the purpose of this form.

Take a look at Example 14 (track 6) and notice that there is not a transition fill leading into the chorus. As you listen to this track, check out how the second eight-bar section jumps out at you. Because there isn't a transition fill, the dynamic shift is accentuated.



Now play the radio treatment form yourself. (Use track 7, the radio treatment play-along loop.) Here are some things to consider as you're practicing.

1. Sing the groove during the verse. This will help you stay focused during the rests.
2. Move your hands along to the loop a couple bars before your entrance. This will help you lock into the feel of the groove and warm up your body.
3. Experiment with different tones on your kit. For example, try riding on the crash for the chorus. Or play on a sloshy hi-hat. Each voice adds a unique texture to the feel of the chorus.

Donny Gruendler is a professional drummer, a Musicians Institute faculty member in Los Angeles, and the author of Carl Fischer's Playing With Drum Loops—How To Work With Drum Loops, Samples, And Backing Tracks. *Gruendler has worked with such artists as Kenny Burrell, D.J. Logic, John Medeski, and Rick Holmstrom. You may contact Donny at donny@donnygruendler.com.*

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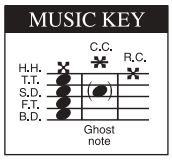
Drum Tabs

The Future Of Drum Notation?

by Ed Breckenfeld

Editor's note: In a recent conversation with MD, *NYC drummer/electronics specialist Billy Messinetti mentioned that his son Kyle was teaching himself to play drums with something called "drum tablature." The following article, which examines this relatively new form of drum notation, is a result of that conversation.*



There's a new form of drum chart proliferating on the Internet. It's an adaptation of guitar tablature called "drum tab." Drum tab is easy to create and can be shared by anyone who has access to a computer. And no music notation software is needed to make a tab. All that's required is a typing keyboard and a working knowledge of drumming. A simple Web search will reveal several sites that offer large numbers of drum tabs for many popular tunes.

Let's take a look at how drum tab works. Here's a simple rock beat in standard drum notation.

1

Here's the same beat in drum tab form.

2

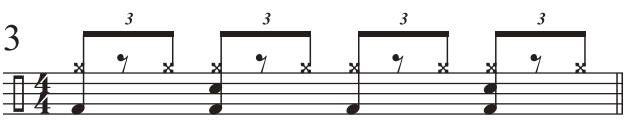
```
HH  I x - x - x - x - x - x - x - x - I
SD  I - - - - o - - - - - - - o - - - I
BD  I o - - - - - - - o - - - - - - - I
      1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a
```

Even though drum tab consists of only typed letters and figures, there are similarities between it and standard notation. The relative position of the notes on their staves and the use of an "x" for a cymbal hit are consistent with both notations.

But some notable differences stand out. Instead of using various note values to create rhythms (quarter notes, 8th notes, etc.), tab uses the letter "o" to represent all drum hits. (The letter I is the barline.) Also, each line of the drum tab staff contains dashes to represent all of the possible notes in that measure. For example, in 4/4 time there are sixteen dashes to correspond with the 16th notes in a bar. The x's and o's sit within the dashes to indicate where each drum is played. (If you want to type your own tabs, use the Courier New font to keep everything lined up vertically.)

Triplet feels and 12/8 time are depicted by using twelve dashes instead of sixteen. Here's a basic shuffle beat in drum notation.

3



The tab version looks like this.

4

```
HH  I x - x x - x x - x x - x I
SD  I - - - o - - - - - o - - I
BD  I o - - o - - o - - o - - I
      1 + a 2 + a 3 + a 4 + a
```

For individual triplets, add extra dashes and place 3s and 6s above them. This measure in standard notation…

5

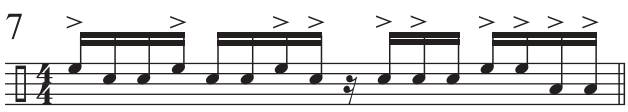
…becomes this in drum tab.

6

```
                  [3]     [6]
HH  I x - x - x - x - - - - - - - - - - - I
SD  I - - - - o - - - o o o o - o o o o o o I
BD  I o - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - I
```

Because of the amount of dashes needed, it becomes impractical to depict 32nd notes or smaller subdivisions in tab. However, drum tabs *can* handle linear patterns of 16th notes fairly well. Here's an example of a one-measure drum fill with accents in standard notation.

7



Here's the tab. You get a fairly good idea of the fill's flow around the drumset with this type of notation. (The accents are capitalized.)

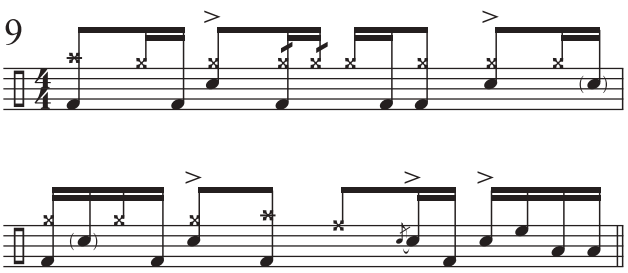
8

```
TT  I O - - O - - O - - - - - - O O - - I
SD  I - o o - o o - O - O O o - - - - I
FT  I - - - - - - - - - - - - - - O O I
```

So far, the two types of notation look fairly similar. Things change drastically, though, when writing a complicated beat that involves more of the kit. The drum tab staff is changeable depending on which drums are used in a particular measure. The tabs in the previous examples used only three lines. Below is a more complex groove with tom-toms and other cymbals added, which brings the total number of lines to seven.

Here's the pattern in standard notation.

9



Here's the drum tab version. (The g stands for ghost note, the F represents an accented flam, and the d's are double strokes.)

10

```
CC  I x - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - I - - - - - - x - - - - - - - - - I
RC  I - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - I - - - - - - - - x - - - - - - - I
HH  I - - x - x - d d x - x - x - x - I x - x - x - - - - - - - - - - - I
TT  I - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - I - - - - - - - - - - - - - - o - - I
SD  I - - - - O - - - - - - - O - - g I - g - - O - - - - - - F - O - - - I
FT  I - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - I - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - o o I
BD  I o - - o - - o - - o o - - - - - I o - - o - - o - - - - - o - - - - I
```

As you can see, a more involved drumbeat produces a rather complicated drum tab. One of the strengths of standard musical notation is that it can group notes together so that patterns are recognizable, even when they involve multiple drums. In a multi-layered beat like Examples 9 and 10, these patterns are much harder to see in tab form. Add more toms and a left-foot hi-hat pattern, and you end up with a ten-line tab that's even more difficult to read.

Because of its design, drum tab is best suited for individual beats and fills. It's not so good for sight-reading complex music. Why then are tab Web sites flourishing? The answer: Availability. Because anyone can write drum tabs, the Internet is flooded with them. You might not be able to find the standard music notation of your favorite Green Day drum part, but there are likely a dozen or more drum tabs of the song on the Web. Of course, the accuracy of anything you find on the Internet is open to question. But with that many options, you're bound to come across a version that seems right to you. And if it doesn't, you can always type up your own version.

Before you start imagining that drum tabs will completely take over, keep in mind that standard drum notation can depict *every* exact detail of a performance in a form that can be quickly sight-read. For this reason, you won't see educational institutions or professional arrangers switching over to tab anytime soon. It's more likely that drum tab will remain a tool for basic reading. Players who do not read music can benefit from the information tabs provide, while drummers who do read can turn to them for hard-to-find transcriptions. But ultimately, drum tab is just another tool, like those brushes you have crammed in your stick bag. What you do with them is up to you.

Ed Breckenfeld is a long-time Chicago-area drummer and drum instructor who records and performs with various Midwestern artists including The Insiders, The Cathy Richardson Band, and Jim Peterik's World Stage. Ed can be reached through his Web site, www.edbreckenfeld.com.

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Modesty And Humility

Time For An Attitude Check?

by Richie Morales

As drummers, we're part of a special fraternity. Of course, some people call it the "Fraternal Order Of Knuckleheads."

Seriously, though, I believe that drummers support one another more than other musicians do. We go to clinics, concerts, and performances given by our idols, mentors, and contemporaries. We devour the information that *MD* provides about the art, history, and evolution of drumming, the business of music, and the drum industry in general. Perhaps even more importantly, we use *MD* as a forum in which we drummers—famous and unknown alike—can exchange ideas and voice opinions about the state of the art.

One thing I find troubling, though, is a distinct lack of modesty and humility that's sometimes displayed by drummers and drum "artists" towards one another, and towards the art of making music in general. This is fostered in part by the realities of the marketplace.

Two Sides To Everything

The very nature of our role as drummers is conflicting. On the one hand, it requires humility. How else can we play in a supportive fashion, making everyone else in the band sound good, while taking direction from just about everybody? To quote the great Elvin Jones, "The role of support is an obligation." We're required to lead without being overbearing, sometimes carrying the ensemble on our backs. In short, we're required to serve the music, creating the optimal environment for it with our groove and time feel.

In order to succeed in the music business, being the best musician we can be isn't always enough.

Unfortunately, in order to succeed in the music business, being the best musician we can be isn't always enough. We often have to aggressively self-promote and network. We have to be competitive, political, and entrepreneurial. In so doing, it's easy to become seduced by the pursuit of flashy acrobatic technique...cultivating the right connections...landing the big gig...scoring the equipment endorsement, and so forth.

Modesty and humility don't go hand-in-hand with generating hype, blowing your own horn all the time, and reciting your résumé and career achievements every time somebody asks, "So, how's it going?" After all, when you're being interviewed, every other word is "I," "me," or "mine."

A healthy ego is a very important component of a performing artist's makeup. How else would we dare to get up in front of people and try to do our thing? But we have to decide: Should we practice to develop our musical skills, in terms of economy of motion, control, dynamics, and power? Or should we practice to develop showy, acrobatic techniques that impress? These questions are equally important for the student, the novice, the weekend warrior, or the highly skilled professional. And the answer is that both approaches are valid, depending on how we want to develop our talent, and what area of the business we're aspiring to.

Guiding Principles

I'm a martial arts enthusiast, and I try to live and train by the principles upon which the martial arts are based: modesty, humility, avoidance of conflict, respect between teacher and student, lack of malevolence (having a good attitude), perseverance and persistence, tolerance, and avoidance of showing off. Whether or not one trains for fitness, sport, or

self-defense and combat applications, one has to remain humble, modest, and respectful in relating to one's fellow practitioners, regardless of their skill level and style. One must also show respect for one's instructors and for the martial arts tradition itself. These principles have served me well in all areas of my life, including music.

In 17th-century Japan, Samurai warrior monks—who were highly adept in the martial arts—also practiced calligraphy and painting. They wrote poetry as well as essays on philosophy and military strategy. They lived by a highly developed code of honor and etiquette, the slightest breach of which could have lethal consequences. As a practical matter, it made sense to have good manners then. And it still does today.

Okay, so we're not faced with life-and-death consequences as the result of our actions in the drum/music business. Not literally anyway. But being humble, having respect for varied musical traditions as well as for our fellow musicians, and being willing to share knowledge and help others is of primary importance. As such, it's important to do periodic "attitude checks" on ourselves, to make sure we're keeping the principles of modesty and humility in mind while we pursue our musical goals.

Richie Morales' career has included work with such artists as The Brecker Brothers Band, Gato Barbieri, Spyro Gyra, Grover Washington Jr., Al Di Meola, and Mike Stern. He is also a member of the jazz faculty at Purchase College (SUNY) Conservatory of Music.

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Paul La Raia

A Recording Guide For The Home Studio Drummer

Part 1: Diving In

by Billy Ward

These days, lots of drummers are getting involved in "home studio" recording. I've personally been recording at my private home studio for the past eleven years. In this article and the one to follow, I'll share some of the important things I've learned over that time.

Your Recording System

To begin with, there are *lots* of different ways to record. I use Pro Tools because it's what I started with and what I'm used to. There are many systems at all kinds of price ranges. However, if at all possible, you should get a system with inputs that will record at +4 dBu levels. Lesser systems are set at -10 dBV. There's a lot of technical stuff involving voltage references between these two input levels, but suffice it to say that if you record at -10 dBV, you'll have 11 dB less volume than the guy with the +4 dBu inputs. That's a whole lot of volume gone missing!

Having a trustworthy room provides peace of mind that cannot be overestimated when determining whether or not your drum sound is great.

Your Room

The quality of the room that you play and record in is as important as the tone of your instrument. In fact, making your room sound better might be the easiest way to improve your drum sound. Plus, it will give you a security blanket to know that your tuning choices are accurate.

MD just published a book by Mark Parsons called *Keep The Peace: A Musician's Guide To Soundproofing*, which offers a soup-to-nuts explanation of how to build and/or treat a room for optimum sound. There are also many other valuable sources of information on the Web and in your local library.

Once you've dealt with the sound of the room, the sound quality *inside* the room becomes crucial. For starters, move your bass drum and snare around the room. Ultimately, you'll find one place where the drums sound better than they do anywhere else.

If possible, have another drummer play your drums while you walk around the room and listen. Concentrate on specific frequencies. Do the low frequencies of the bass drum drop out as you move around the room? Or perhaps the mids? This means that you have standing waves. If your room is small, you'll probably need bass traps, because it takes a very large room to allow low-frequency soundwaves to develop. In a normal, smaller room (mine is 17' x 15', with a 9' ceiling), the bass waves need to be stopped so that they don't bounce around and create havoc.

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room. Obviously you should try to have speakers that sound good. But at the very least you should *know* your speakers and their tendencies. In other words, listen to lots of your favorite records in your studio room, and remember how things sound. Headphones eliminate the influence of a room altogether, so they can be valuable for "reality checks."

Place your speakers in the room and listen. At my studio, I selected a tone generator from the Pro Tools menu of plug-ins and listened to different specific frequencies. As I moved my head (only three feet from the speakers), there were times when the 4 kHz tone disappeared completely! None of my walls were parallel (which they say is a good thing when it comes to a studio), yet it turned out that I needed all kinds of help to not only trap the bass but to diffuse some of the higher frequencies. I'd imagine that any small drum room will have these kinds of obstacles.

After I spent $800 on professional diffusion and bass-trap materials (from Auralex), my room sounded consistent as I walked around in it. You can also achieve some diffusion in your room with your other drums (stacked), bookshelves, and even some furniture pieces (if there's space).

Having a trustworthy room provides peace of mind that cannot be overestimated when mixing a record or determining whether or not your drum sound is great.

Mic' Preamps

Because drums have so many transients and are *loud*, the mic' and the mic' preamp together are critical elements in your recording chain. The marketplace is full of mic's and mic' pre's at all price levels. Go for quality, not quantity. If you can buy two to four microphones and an equal number of quality mic' preamps, you can start making great-sounding recordings.

Most engineers will tell you that when budget is a factor, the mic' preamp is even more important than the microphone. The better mic' pre's are very expensive, and even less-expensive good ones generally go for about $500 per channel. Beware of inexpensive so-called tube-mic' pre's. They claim to have "warm tube sound," which might be marketing hype. I believe that those mic' pre's offer that desirable characteristic because they have transformers in the circuit.

My mic' pre suggestions for getting that "warmth" include Neve, API, and Trident A Range (aka Geoffrey Daking), and none of these have tubes. A tube preamp can just as easily be colorless (in a good way) as it can add a color to the sound. If a tube pre does add color, it probably has transformers, just like the non-tube pre's mentioned above. (Manley is one example of this sort.) It might have point-to-point wiring, commonly called Class A.

There's something wonderful to be said for colorless, pure-path mic' preamps as well (especially with overhead mic's). Some good examples are GML, Earthworks, Millennia, and Avalon. But over the years most pop-music engineers have preferred preamps that color the sound, which is why Neves are so in demand.

Here's a useful note: If you have a few great mic' pre's, you can add a lesser pre (like that Mackie that's sitting around for live gigs) for those extra channels that you might need that day. The overall sonic impact of your record will not be too adversely affected.

Microphones

There are all kinds of mic's out there now. Many are made in China and claim to be as good as the old German brands like Schoeps, Neumann, and Gefell. In my opinion, this is an area where you can save money if you're on a budget. Start your studio with a good dynamic mic' for the bass drum, like a Shure Beta 52, Audix D6, or AKG D112. Get a Shure SM57 for the snare. It's very affordable, and it's probably the most-used mic' in the history of recording.

Next, get two identical condenser mic's for overheads (in stereo), or one overhead and one room mic'. Shure, Audio Technica, Rode, and CAD offer reasonably priced condenser microphones. You can get something made in China for even less if you haven't the budget for better mic's.

Condenser mic's that have switchable polar patterns will give you more bang for the buck, plus you'll learn about how different patterns "hear" your drums. A cardioid pattern hears more in front and a teeny bit behind the mic'. Omni hears all around the mic' and won't boost the bass frequencies if it's near a drum. A figure-8 pattern hears in front and behind equally (well, almost equally), yet it has a smaller width in its two patterns than a cardioid mic' does. You can easily change the timbre of your drums by changing patterns and mic' placement.

I started my studio with a Beta 52, an SM 57, and a pair of switchable-pattern AKG 414s, and those were the only microphones I owned for more than four years. The Beard and Patitucci duets on my record, *Two Hands Clapping*, were recorded with these four mic's going through four Daking mic' preamps.

Volume

It's important to remember that everything in audio is basically about volume. When they used to record to tape, it was okay—and even desirable—to saturate the tape a bit. This would add a pleasing color if it was well controlled by an engineer.

One Shure Beta 52, one Shure SM 57, and a pair of switchable-pattern AKG 414s served Billy's recording needs for more than four years.

The Daking Mic' Pre/EQ combines a high-performance microphone preamp with a four-band equalizer.

However, in this era of digital recording, over-the-top levels will cause nasty distortion that nobody wants to hear. On your digital recorder, digital zero (which is different on varying systems, but generally occurs at either -12, -14, -16, or -18 dB) is what 0 dB once was on a tape.

In general, if you're recording a track that has lots of high end and not much low end (like brushes on cymbals), you need to "hit" the meter of your digital recorder a bit higher than -12 dB to make sure that all those details are recorded properly. A large bass wave (like a bass drum), on the other hand, should stay near the -12 dB mark and not get too hot.

Something that took me a long time to realize is that a great stereo mix goes from front to back just as much as from left to right. A front-to-back image can be encouraged by miking instruments from differing distances. I don't think I'd like to hear a record where everything was miked from one foot away.

Equalizers

Equalization not only affects the frequencies of your sound, it also adds or subtracts volume. If you boost 5 kHz when tracking, and then end up turning that same 5 kHz down upon mixing...well, you're really messing up. That particular frequency will have no dynamic range on the track, and the instrument will feel lifeless. This is why many engineers will refrain from using *any* EQ when tracking.

So be careful. I spent years adding EQ—telling myself, "Well, it's Daking EQ, so it's safe and good"—only to realize much later that I should have simply turned the instrument up. Even today, I sometimes reach for 12 k to get more sizzle on that snare when mixing, without checking to see if I simply need the drum to be louder in the mix. *Doh!*

Learning to recognize the various EQ frequencies (give or take a hundred Hertz) is a great job to undertake. This article includes a simple EQ chart that has helped me recognize frequencies more easily. (At this point in my life, my hearing definitely has a severe dip at 4 to 5 k, thanks to all the click tracks I've had banging in my head over the years!)

Compressor/Limiters

All compressors are limiters if you set them that way. Generally, a limiter is a compressor with a high ratio. The ratio tells the compressor to give you less volume back than you are putting in.

The Neve 33609 offers comprehensive limiting and compression functions.

Think of it like Vegas. If I give you three bucks and you give me one back, that's a 3:1 ratio, and that's compression. If I give you ten bucks and you give me one back, that's limiting, at 10:1. Limiters are good for making sure that you aren't hitting the recorder with levels that are too hot. But they can sound heavy-handed, so be careful and use your ears.

A normal signal-path chain would be mic' > mic' pre > compressor/limiter > recorder. Some folks place an equalizer between the mic' pre and the compressor, while others place one after the compressor. Frequencies that you've turned down will get less compression if they're placed before the compressor. Some engineers prefer to boost certain frequencies before the compressor so that those frequencies get "squished" yet feel loud.

One way to describe compression is to imagine the signal (your drum sound) being a human face. If you push this face into a screen door it will become somewhat changed in appearance (sound). It could become kind of scary, or not. In a way, it appears larger as well. This is what a compressor does; it raises the perceived level of the softer items by controlling the louder items.

A better-sounding compressor (which usually means more expensive) will shape the sound, much like changing EQ can do. If money is an issue (and when isn't it?), you can always start with less expensive compressors and move up to the big boys when you can afford them.

Eventually, as we gain more experience in recording, we learn some tricks—things that we tend to apply a lot. That's what I'll be discussing in next month's issue. See you then!

Billy Ward has worked with Carly Simon, Robbie Robertson, Ace Frehley, John Patitucci, and Joan Osborne. His book, Inside Out: Exploring The Mental Aspects Of Drumming, *was recently released by Modern Drummer Publications. He also has an award-winning DVD out,* Big Time. *To respond to this article, or for more information, go to the drummer's discussion forum at www.billyward.com.*

EQ Chart

30 Hz to 90 Hz	first octave bass
80 Hz to 250 Hz	second octave bass
275 Hz to 325 Hz	"warm" zone
375 Hz to 425 Hz	"mud" zone
500 Hz to 900 Hz	midrange (watch for "honk")
850 Hz to 1.5 kHz	"nasal" zone
1.75 kHz to 3 kHz	first octave "presence"
3.5 kHz to 4.25 kHz	second octave "presence"
4.5 kHz to 5.5 kHz	"sibilance" zone
6.5 kHz to 7.5 kHz	third octave "presence"
9.0 kHz to 12.5 kHz	high end
12.5 kHz or higher	way up

The "Hi" And The Mighty

An Ode To Innovative Hi-Hat Use In Rock 'N' Roll

by Steve Holtz

The hi-hat evolved in the early days of jazz, some say to replicate the sound of two marching crash cymbals coming together in a clenched fashion. Ever since then, the hi-hat—whether played with the foot or with a stick—has been a primary timekeeper for set drummers.

Despite its history, the hi-hat is rarely analyzed. Occasionally you'll hear about a drummer's intricate cymbal work, but more often than not, it's the roundhouse trip across the toms or the intricate snare drum fill that gets listeners' attention. But have you ever tried to play a drumset *without* a hi-hat? It's like losing a limb.

In this article, we'll examine ten of the most effective uses of the hi-hat in modern music. Certainly there are equally revolutionary uses of the hi-hat in jazz, reggae, and other styles. But this list is intended to shine the spotlight on a little-mentioned, but much-needed piece of the *rock* drummer's kit.

We begin where so many great rock 'n' roll stories begin: The Beatles.

The Beatles

"In My Life," from *Rubber Soul*

Ringo Starr

Ringo must have known that a song as elegant as this ode to "friends and lovers" needed something special. The result is a hi-hat hit on the "&" of 3 during the verses to accompany an otherwise standard snare/bass drum rhythm. That's it. Subtle…simple…and unbelievably effective.

Black Sabbath

"War Pigs," from *Paranoid*

Bill Ward

Ozzy Osbourne sings the verses to this heavy metal archytype over a lone hi-hat stamping out quarter notes. Every four measures, the full band comes in on a bombastic two-8th-note hit. The deceptive part of Bill Ward's approach is that he sneaks in an open hi-hat accent in an unexpected place: on the & of 1 before those band hits. Very cool.

Led Zeppelin

"Rock And Roll," from *Led Zeppelin IV*

John Bonham

Tricky, thrashy, and infinitely timeless (in more ways than one). Yes, there is a rational count to the introduction of this...well...rock 'n' roll tune. But sitting down to figure it out and playing it note-perfect would yank the soul and the grit right out of this memorable piece of hi-hat work. And you can just imagine the looks on the faces of Page and Jones as they watched Bonzo on the first few run-throughs of this song: "Okay, so we come in *when*?"

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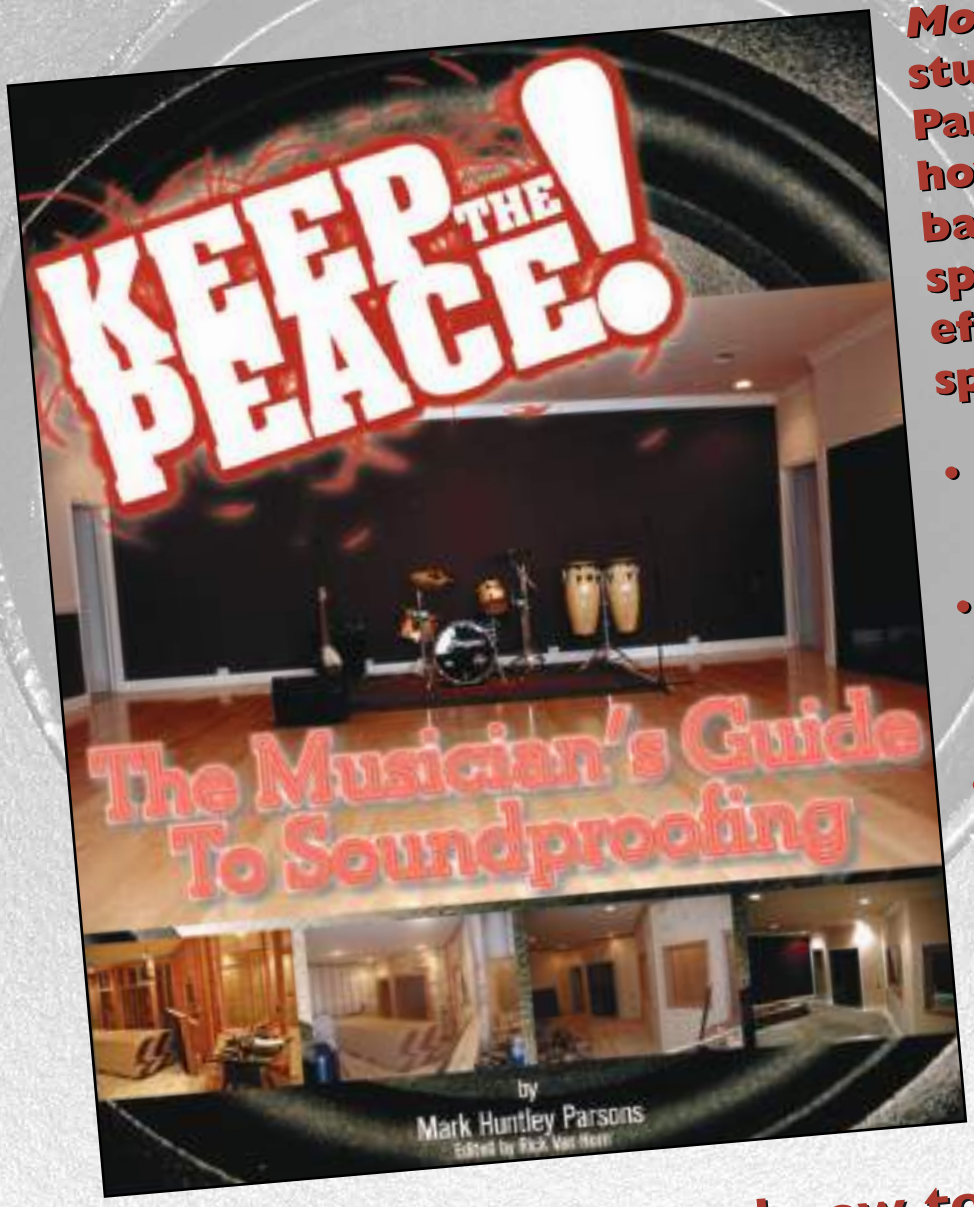

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Isaac Hayes

"Theme From Shaft,"
from *Shaft* (soundtrack)
Willie Hall

This spot almost went to the drummers for Gloria Gaynor or KC & the Sunshine Band—performers who took the concept of 16th notes played on the hi-hat and made it a way of life. But while those drummers became standard-bearers for a musical class, it only seems right to honor the drummer (and the song) that set the prototype.

In this case, it's Willie Hall, the drummer for the BarKays, whom Hayes borrowed while recording this classic soundtrack hit. "Skittering 16th notes" played as part of Hall's "rat-a-tat cymbal part" is how a recent article in *Blender* magazine described it, accurately adding that the rhythm "became the foundation for a little genre called disco."

Lynyrd Skynyrd

"Sweet Home Alabama,"
from *Second Helping*
Bob Burns

What cover-band drummer hasn't luxuriated in hitting that hi-hat splash that cues the rest of the band to come in at the beginning of this classic song? Maybe it's the timing. Maybe it's the placement. Heck, maybe it's the way the hats are way up front in the mix. Whatever it is, Bob Burns somehow made that splash—continued intermittently yet consistently throughout the song—a percussion trademark for this ode to the Cotton State.

The Clash

"Lost In A Supermarket,"
from *London Calling*
Topper Headon

The Rastafarians in Jamaica had been playing the hi-hat only on the "&" of the beat for years. But it was this track from The Clash's breakout album that brought the idea to future punks in England and the US, prompting a new way of looking at hi-hat use in power-pop and punk music. And when Topper

Headon seemingly gets bored, he starts playing on both the "&" and the "a" of the measure just to spice things up (and really give your wrist a workout).

The Police

"Walking On The Moon,"
from *Regatta de Blanc*
Stewart Copeland

It's been said that The Who didn't have a lead guitar in their music so much as they had lead drums with Keith Moon doing his thing. If that's true, then we submit that this reggae-rock song from The Police is driven by lead hi-hat.

Copeland is all over the hi-hat throughout the tune. He makes it dance while calling attention to its beauty—and to the intricacies of which it is capable. It's the perfect complement to Andy Summers' sparse, echoing guitar chords. And if that's not enough, Copeland keeps the bass drum landing squarely on 2 and 4 without flaw through the whole thing.

Devo

"Whip It," from *Freedom Of Choice*
Alan Myers

This song brought together the reigning musical genres of its time—rock, punk, new wave, and, with its driving, aggressive 16th notes on the hi-hat, disco—into one package. Frankly, Devo probably should have been a one-hit wonder or even a cult-following band. But with its unique take on all things pop, the Ohio band made an impression that no other musical act has ever quite duplicated, and that lasts to this day.

Rush

"Red Barchetta,"
from *Moving Pictures*
Neil Peart

It would be tough to create a list like this for just about *any* part of the drumset without Neil Peart making the cut, but call this one a sentimental favorite. *Moving Pictures* introduced many drummers to Rush—and to a whole new way of thinking about playing the drums.

On "Red Barchetta," Peart uses the same exact pattern on the hi-hat—a simple 1&2, 3&4, with the hats opening and closing on the 2 and the 4—in two distinct ways. At the beginning of the song, that simple pattern creates tension, helping the song (which fades in from nothing) to build into something greater. Think of it as the hi-hat equivalent of the theme from *Jaws*. Interestingly, Neil works it in reverse at the end of the song.

In the middle of the verse, the same pattern becomes a fill, helping the song move its folksy lyrics from a "country place" to an effort to "elude the eye," ultimately getting caught up in a high-speed chase. And all of this doesn't even take into account the numerous accented bombs that Neil drops on the hi-hats throughout the song.

Nirvana

"Smells Like Teen Spirit,"
from *Nevermind*
Dave Grohl

Grohl's trashy quarter notes on the hi-hat drive the chorus and solo on this tune with their hypnotic consistency, even as complete cacophony slam-dances around them. At the same time, Grohl displays an array of dynamics, from which newcomers and pros alike could learn a few things. It's no wonder this song launched an entire musical movement and broke down barriers in the music industry.

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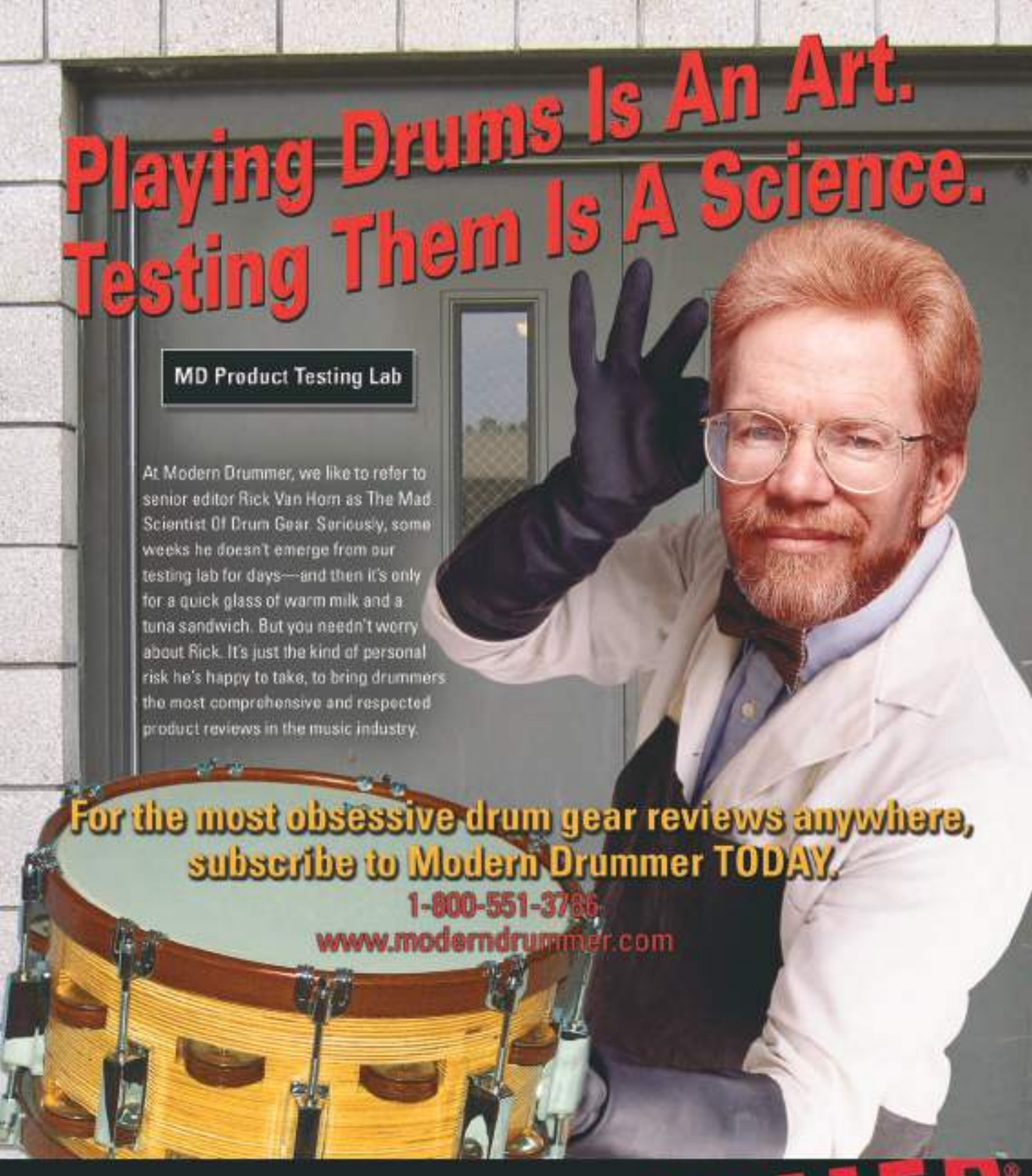
At Modern Drummer, we like to refer to senior editor Rick Van Horn as The Mad Scientist Of Drum Gear. Seriously, some weeks he doesn't emerge from our testing lab for days—and then it's only for a quick glass of warm milk and a tuna sandwich. But you needn't worry about Rick. It's just the kind of personal risk he's happy to take, to bring drummers the most comprehensive and respected product reviews in the music industry.



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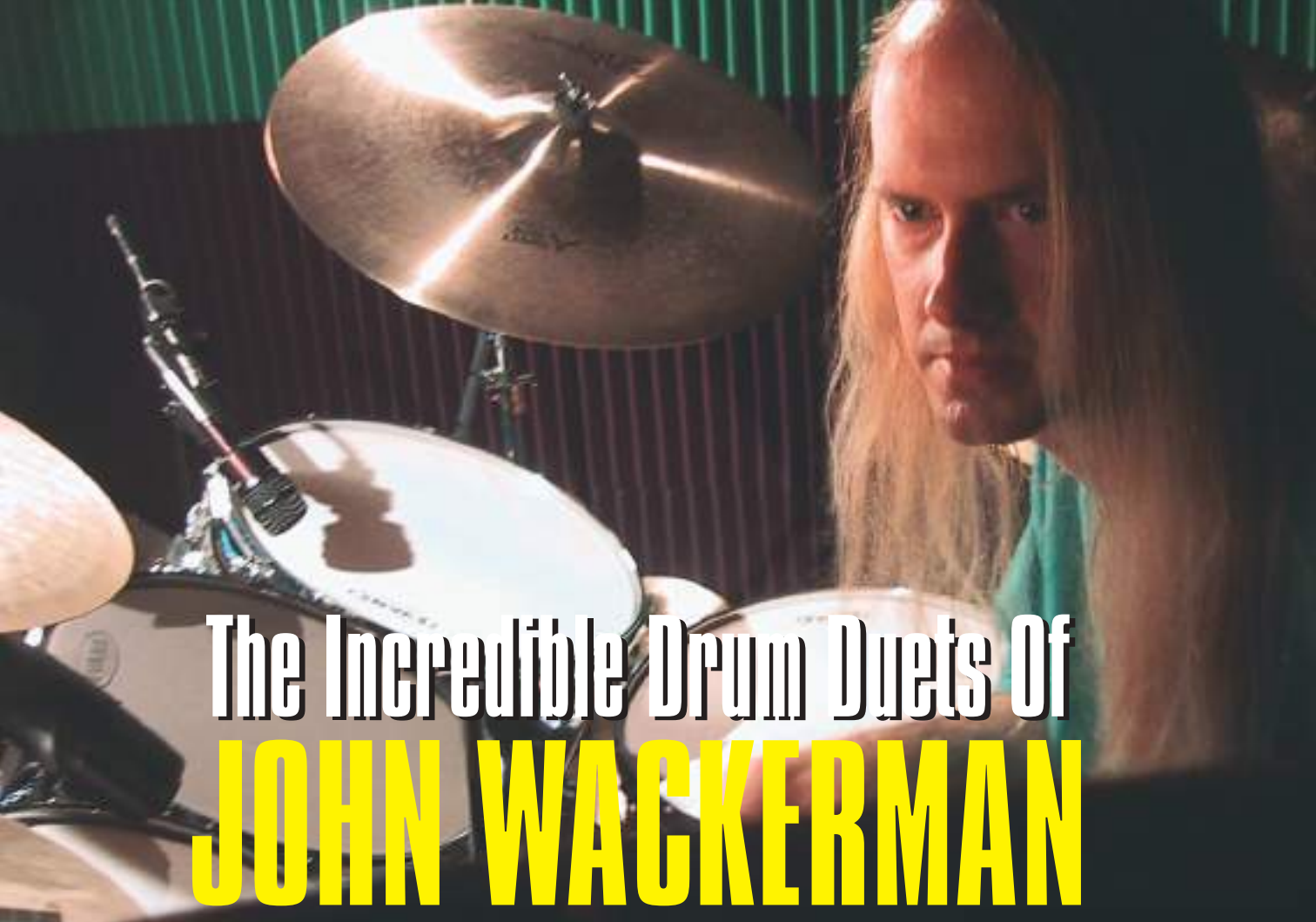


The Incredible Drum Duets Of JOHN WACKERMAN

by Waleed Rashidi

After decades of drumming behind recognized names like Maynard Ferguson, Patrick Moraz, and Lindsey Buckingham, plus tons of session work, John Wackerman decided it was time to take things into his *own* hands. His idea was to create a debut solo album. However, Wackerman didn't head out completely alone. Instead, he recruited a who's-who list of musicians to work with him on his new venture—and all of them just happen to be drummers.

Titled *John Wackerman Drum Duets Vol. 1* (with *Vol. 2* already in the works), the self-produced and self-released album features incredible collaborations from a vast cross-section of world-class names. The drummers "dueting" with Wackerman on this record include Steve Gadd, Josh Freese, Alex Acuña, Ricky Lawson, Steve Smith, Peter Erskine, Gary Novak, Adrian Young, Ron Tutt, Clayton Cameron, Marc Atkinson, and John Ferraro, as well as John's brothers Brooks and Chad, and his father, Chuck.

Instead of a disc crammed with loose solos, Wackerman created original compositions or re-arranged some classics for each drummer to play along with him. He had the drummers base their performances on the prescribed material. And even though Wackerman and his featured guests appear together on the tracks, parts were typically recorded separately. Often John would record his basic track ahead of time, then meet with the drummer, who would record his part "alongside" the pre-recorded track. Wackerman later edited these performances and added elements.

At his Southern California home, Wackerman talked to us about recording with his drum idols, coordinating a project this extensive with the assistance of his wife, Linda, and being able to present a solo disc that's not just for him or for his fans, but for the drumming community at large.

MD: What served as inspiration to start work on the *Drum Duets* CD?

John: Well, I've had this idea for a long time. Then finally, about three years ago, I got my brothers involved first. The whole project escalated from there. Chad recorded his part three years ago and was the first. After Chad, I got Brooks to do it.

MD: Was it initially supposed to be just the Wackerman family?

John: No. I always had the idea of having other people. But my brothers were the easiest—and the cheapest—to get! [laughs]

I always had the idea of making a drum solo album, even though there are a lot of great ones out there. But I wanted to do something based on more compositional stuff.

MD: Were all the tracks recorded at the same studio?

John: Actually, it was done at different studios all over the place. For instance, I went to Nashville to record Ron Tutt, the legendary drummer originally with Elvis and currently with Neil Diamond. With everybody's schedules, it was sometimes easier to go to them and work with them at their favorite studios.

I produced the project, arranged it, and wrote it, and I'm the record company too. I paid everybody and did the whole thing. It was a great experience, a lesson in persistence, and certainly a total labor of love.

John: Everybody who appears on the record was on my wish list. The final lineup was pretty amazing. Clayton Cameron is a phenomenal brush player, and Ron Tutt was a big influence on me when I was growing up. And Gadd has been a mentor of mine since I was a kid. I think the lineup is a good balance of players, plus I've got my family on it, which is pretty cool.

"When I started the project, some people said there was no market for this type of record. Well, that's okay. Sometimes you've got to do what you've got to do."

MD: Was there some sort of demo that you had sent to each drummer ahead of time?

John: It depended on who it was. For Steve Gadd, I didn't send him anything. He walked in and I gave him the chart for the Hendrix tune "Manic Depression." He wanted to hear the original version to be reminded of what Mitch Mitchell played on it. And then he sat down and recorded it in one take—and nailed it. I then had him do a second take, which he took in a different direction. That one was totally cool as well. And that was it.

MD: Did you have a broad wish list of drummers?

Steve Gadd and John Wackerman

When I started the project, some people said there was no market for this type of record. Well, that's okay. Sometimes you've got to do what you've got to do.

MD: How tough was it getting some of these drummers to commit to the project?

John: Well, a lot of it was scheduling. But there's a story about getting Steve Gadd, who like I said was a big influence on me. At a Zildjian party at the NAMM show last year, Steve was there. My wife, Linda, went right up to him and worked out the whole deal right there.

MD: Were you nervous working with Gadd?

John: Sure! He's a legend, but it was also a dream come true. And he's playing so great. He sat down at the drums and totally killed it.

MD: You came up with your own arrangements and whatnot, but did he share his own ideas with you?

John: Steve came up with some great ideas after he played it. He played his first take, then he played the second take, and then he came in and I told him what I was thinking and he said, "Well, maybe you should move the solo section earlier." So, yeah, he definitely had some good arrangement ideas.

MD: Did you receive creative input from the other players on the disc?

John: Yeah, it varied. It depended on who it was. For instance, with Clayton, I had

continued on page 134

Dueting With John
The Drummers' Perspective

It's hard to deny that John Wackerman really did assemble a cast of some of the finest drummers working today to support him on his new *Drum Duets* CD. *Modern Drummer* spoke to most of the participants about their impressions of John as a producer and as a fellow drummer, their recording session with him, and their thoughts about the project as it relates to the percussion community.

Although the drummers on Wackerman's album are all experienced studio performers, some found this particular session to be a departure from their typical tracking day. "I've never done a duet with another drummer, so that in itself was a first," says Gary Novak. "Of course, all of us have sat down in a practice room with a drum buddy and thrown down for a couple of hours. But this was much more involved. Most sessions for me end up tracking for days on a motion picture, so this was a different experience all together."

"The content was different for me because I was playing against other drums," says Ricky Lawson. "Playing like that took me in a whole different direction."

Wackerman with Ricky Lawson

Wackerman often had a prepared chart and sound file sent to the drummer ahead of time, which in some cases made the session much easier. "There was no guesswork," says Ron Tutt. Though, with some of the guys, the charts and music left them scratching their heads—at least initially. "John sent some music that looked like a black page," laughs brush master Clayton Cameron. "He was very cool in that he told me to just play brushes on it."

"When I heard the piece while looking at the music, I'll admit to my not being sure *what* was going on or what I might be able to bring to the project," admits Peter Erskine. "But John's composition and production method turned out to be inviting as well as challenging."

Wackerman attempted to custom-tailor his compositions and arrangements to each drummer's strengths, background, and genre interests. "I think John did his homework in my case," Tutt says. "He captured the essence of what I might be recognized for from my playing with Elvis."

Drum buddies: John and Josh

"The entire tune, from start to finish, is strong," says Erskine. "And there were plenty of opportunities to stretch out. I think this project brought out a good side of me, one that I keep buried most of the time these days."

With Wackerman's guidance, the drummers skillfully laid their tracks, often with much success in a short amount of time. "Once we were set up," Steve Smith says, "we worked on the recording for about three hours and tried a few different approaches to the piece."

"The session was very smooth, except for the times when John got out his whip and threatened to use it when I didn't play a smooth five-stroke roll," jokes Wackerman's younger brother, Brooks.

However, not everyone felt comfortable with their performance. "I have to be honest in saying that I don't think I did a great job," says Josh Freese, who noted that he had to squeeze the session in around a very hectic schedule. "John sounded great on the track I did. I really don't feel like I completely rose to the occasion."

Wackerman was found to be easygoing and friendly in the studio. "The atmosphere was definitely cool in a Southern California kind of way," remembers Clayton.

John often let the participants find their own way onto the track. "He let me do whatever came to mind," says No Doubt's Adrian Young. "For the first time, I could go off and not hold back. John was easy to work with."

"John wanted me to really go for it and play to my peak, which is always fun and exciting to do."—Steve Smith

Clayton Cameron

"As the producer, John was very liberal with the parts I played," says Marc Atkinson. "He allowed me to play what I thought was appropriate for his piece. After I recorded the song a couple of times, he made a couple of small suggestions about changing a voicing or taking a slightly different approach that I hadn't thought of, and they worked out great."

Adrian Young

Although Wackerman had a clear goal of exactly what he was seeking to accomplish, he was also flexible enough to make modifications to his compositions, often collaborating closely with the drummers. "John definitely had preset ideas," Tutt says. "But as the session went along, we would come up with other ideas to try."

"John was very easy to work with, open to my suggestions. And he had some very good suggestions too," says Steve Smith. "Basically he wanted me to really go for it and play to my peak, which is always fun and exciting to do. I liked the piece he came up with, but I had some composition/thematic/arrangement ideas that I felt would make it better, and he incorporated them into the piece."

When all was said and done, the participants felt honored to be a part of the album and had positive remarks about Wackerman. "John is a great person and a very good musician," says Alex Acuña. "I wish him a lot of success and prosperity, and to keep going for his dreams and making the music the way he's doing it."

"I think this project brought out a good side of me, one that I keep buried most of the time these days."—Peter Erskine

"I feel that this album is very exciting and many people will be inspired by it," says John Ferraro. "It was truly an honor to be invited to participate in such a high-caliber project."

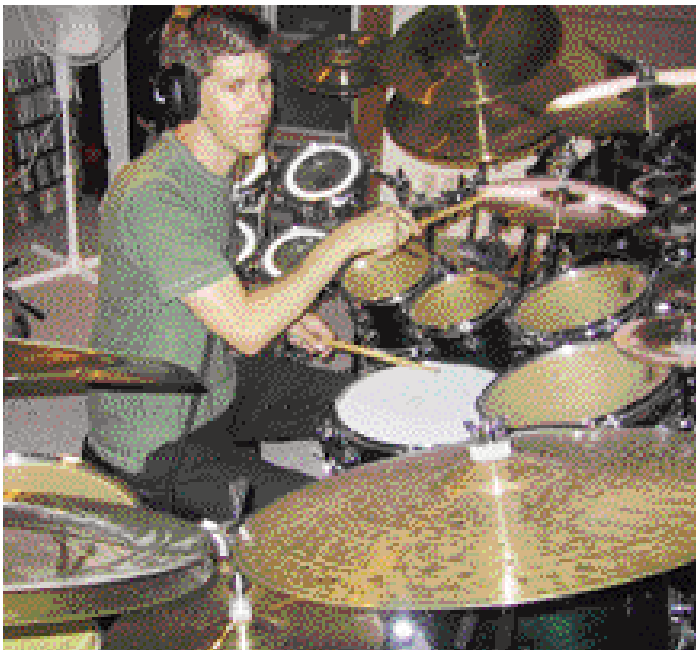
"I think this record is a great addition to the drumming community, and we're looking forward to volume *two*," says John's father, Chuck.

Alex Acuña and John

"John has many of the world's best drummers playing on this CD," says brother Chad. "Plus he gets to show what he's about as a unique player and writer. What could be better than that?"

Waleed Rashidi

Brothers Chad and Brooks Wackerman



sent him a chart beforehand. But he was on tour with Tony Bennett at the time and didn't have a chance to look at it. And if you listen to that particular arrangement, there's a lot going on. He pretty much came in and sightread it.

MD: It's obviously a testament to some of these drummers' proficiency.

John: Oh, yeah. And when it comes to brushes, Clayton is insane, as you can hear on the track. He just killed all that stuff.

MD: When you wrote these compositions, did you write them for the specific drummer in mind?

John: That's exactly it. I was thinking, What would really showcase what this drummer does and make it musical but definitely have some cool playing on there? And with Gadd's thing, I thought it would be cool to do "Manic Depression" because it's an old rock standard but it's in three, which isn't used in a lot of stuff.

MD: Talk about how you switched gears mentally. Did you find yourself adapting to each drummer's persona, like putting yourself into Gadd's or Tutt's shoes? And if so, how?

John: Well, I didn't want it to be a drum battle. I wanted it to be more of a musical composition. I wanted someone to listen to the piece and go, "Okay, that's cool stuff," as opposed to it being a drumming competition.

I tried to come up with ideas that would complement what the other drummers would play. The piece I wrote for Gadd was based on what I thought he might play. Then I tried to play stuff on the drums that would counter what he does, as opposed to going in there and playing exactly like him. I also thought it would be interesting to see how my style melds with his.

When I did the piece with Josh Freese, I thought it would be cool to take a song that everybody knows—"We Will Rock You"—tweak it, and make it a drum-focused piece. I sent it to Josh—he was out with Sting at the time—and then he emailed back saying he was into it.

MD: You can actually hear the lead line in the rhythm of the track.

John: Oh, yeah. And Josh was fun to work with. I've known him since he was a kid. His brother Jason plays keys and sax, and he was in a band with my brother Brooks. It was one of their first bands when they were kids. So I've known Josh since he was twelve. I took him to see Vinnie Colaiuta in LA.

The funny thing was, Josh came in and didn't bring any gear. He didn't bring sticks or anything, and he killed the track. He walked in, nailed it, and walked out.

MD: Were you seeking continuity among the tracks, or were you aiming to make each one as distinct as possible?

John: The thing that I was trying to do was make it *interesting*. In this day and age, we all have so many influences—everything from rap to fusion to jazz or whatever. So since it was my solo project, I thought it would be great to have all these different drummers from different genres and have the tracks be completely different. So continuity-wise, in some ways there really isn't any. But I guess since I'm writing most of the pieces, there is a connection.

MD: Was there additional instrumentation outside of the percussion realm on any of the tracks?

John: I used Roland V-Drums, so there are things that sound melodic, because they're electronic toms. But it's all drum-sample based. I stayed away from any other instruments because I thought it would make it a more unique project.

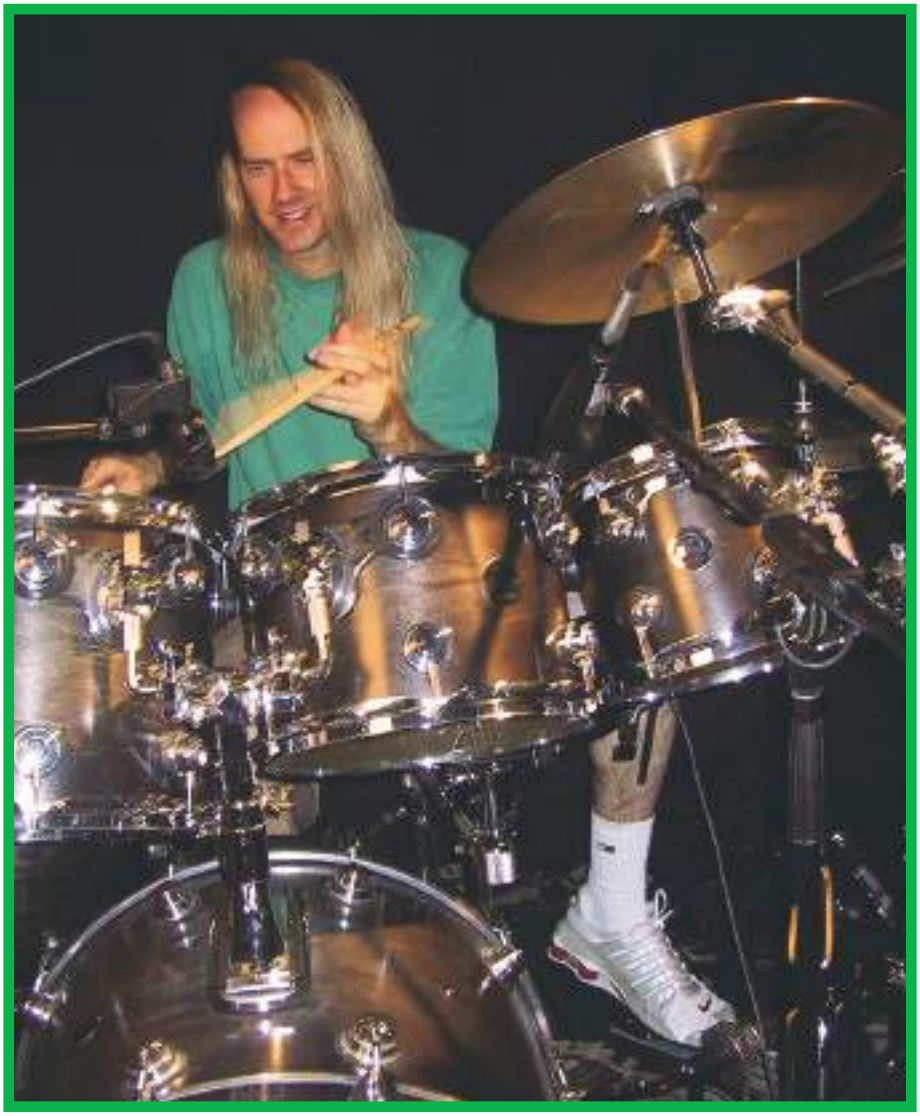
MD: Tell us about dealing with the different personalities.

John: The cool thing that I have to say about drummers is that when it all comes down to playing, it's amazing how there is a drum community—it goes far above and beyond egos and all that stuff. It's amazing. Everybody, especially on this album, loves to play. When Linda would call people up, everybody was gracious, which is pretty amazing considering this is my own little project.

MD: Certain drummers can be more exacting about things than others. Was there a variety of opposing traits among those you worked with?

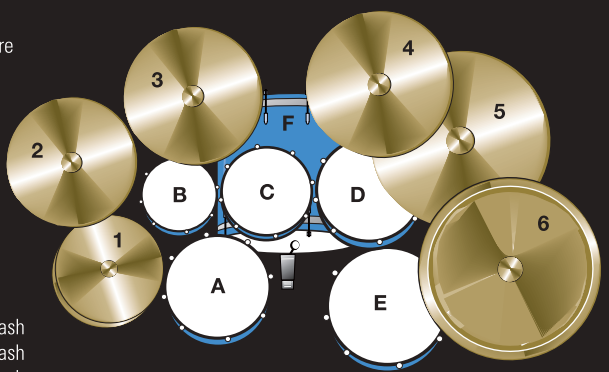
John: I wouldn't say there were opposites. For instance, Steve Gadd, when he came in, only did two takes, and it wasn't

John Wackerman



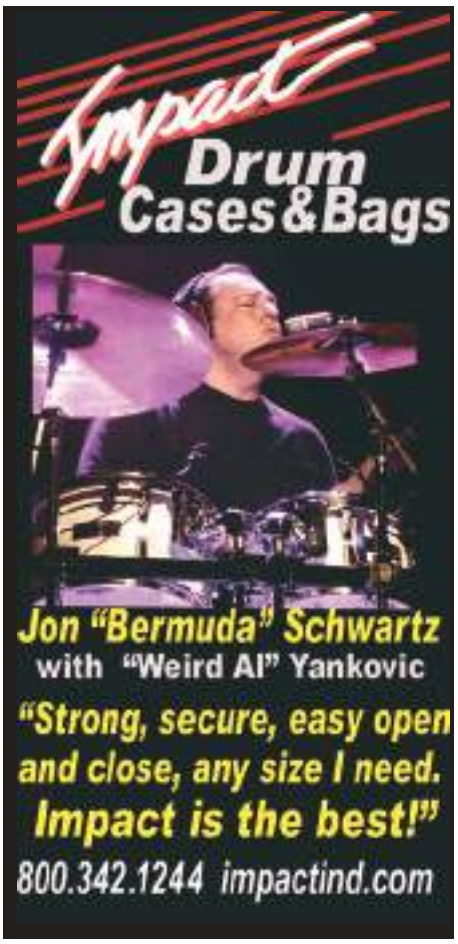
John's Kit

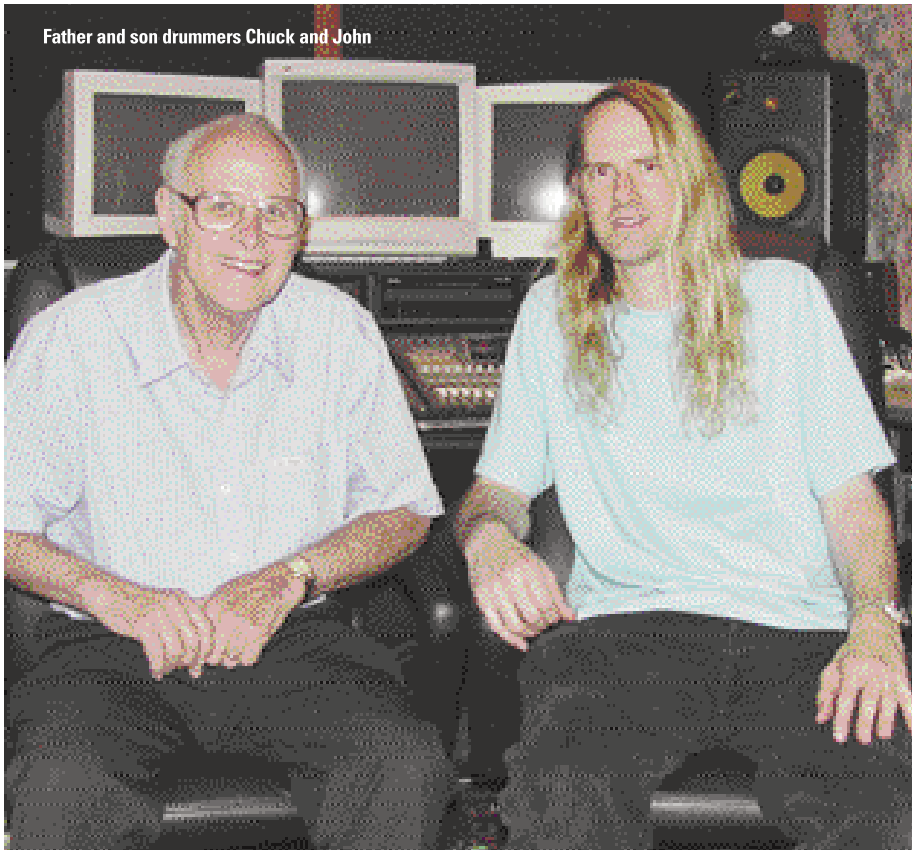
Drums: DW in black oil finish
A. 5x14 Collectors maple snare
B. 8x10 rack tom
C. 9x12 rack tom
D. 11x14 rack tom
E. 14x16 floor tom
F. 18x22 bass drum
(John also occasionally adds four DW piccolo toms)



Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 14" K Custom Dark hi-hats
2. 16" K Dark medium-thin crash
3. 17" K Dark medium-thin crash
4. 18" K Dark medium-thin crash
5. 22" K Constantinople medium ride
6. 20" Oriental China Trash

Percussion: Rhythm Tech mounted tambourines
Hardware: DW, including a 9000 series double pedal (medium-loose spring tension)
Heads: Evans Power Center on snare batter with Hazy 300 snare-side (Moon Gel for muffling batter head), coated Genera G2s on tops of toms with G1s on bottoms (Moon Gel for muffling), EQ3 on bass drum batter with EQ3 Resonant on front (DW pillow and shredded newspaper inside for muffling)
Sticks: Vater 5B model (hickory with wood tip)
Electronics: Roland TD-20 V-Drums





Father and son drummers Chuck and John

because he was blowing it off. It was because he nailed it. There was no reason to play any more.

In fact, none of the drummers involved blew it off. Each one of them was pretty concerned and wanted to do a great job. And since it's a "drum" record, they wanted to hear playbacks and make sure all their stuff came out right. Honestly, in a sense, I was surprised that everybody was that into it. Everyone from Adrian to Clayton to Gadd to Brooks was into it. In fact, they were *going* for it. Nobody held back.

MD: I know you grew up in a very musical family. Can you talk about your musical upbringing?

John: I was born in Seal Beach, California, and when we were young, my dad took us to drum teachers, including Murray Spivak, who does all the classical stuff, and Chuck Flores, who taught us independence. I actually started out on mallets, vibes, and marimba, and studied with Charlie Shoemaker, a bebop guy, and Earl Hatch, who's a classical marimbist.

MD: What was it like to translate what you learned on mallets to the kit?

John: I think it gives you a different musical approach, because you're used to dealing with melody and all that. I definitely think it helped in a lot of ways. Physically, yeah, you're doing the same kind of stuff, so it was an easy transition.

MD: So you got your start playing in your dad's jazz band?

John: Yeah. After that, when I was sixteen, I started playing with Bill Watrous in his big band and combo. I did that for a couple years. Then I played with Maynard Ferguson. That was in the mid-'80s. From there, I played with Kazumi Watanabe and then with Patrick Moraz. Eventually I got the gig with Lindsey Buckingham.

MD: What have been some of your best experiences on stage?

John: The nice thing about doing a jazz tour like with Kazumi Watanabe is that the audiences really appreciate intricate music, especially in Japan and Europe. It seems like there's more of a following over there for that type of music. So touring with him was fun. We got to do the Montreux Jazz Festival. On the other hand, doing the big arena-rock stuff with Lindsey Buckingham was cool as well.

MD: After all of that touring, you decided to do session work. Have you done any more touring since?

John: No. I got married and decided to stay in town and build my recording career. My duets project came about because I thought it would be cool to do something with drummers, play some duets, but have a different take on it.

MD: How did your setup change from track to track on the CD?

John: I always like to change things up, especially with this one. For instance, with Clayton, if you listen to the drums on that track, we're using jazz kits with 18" bass drums and short-stack toms. On Gadd's track, I played a five-piece kit. So yeah, my

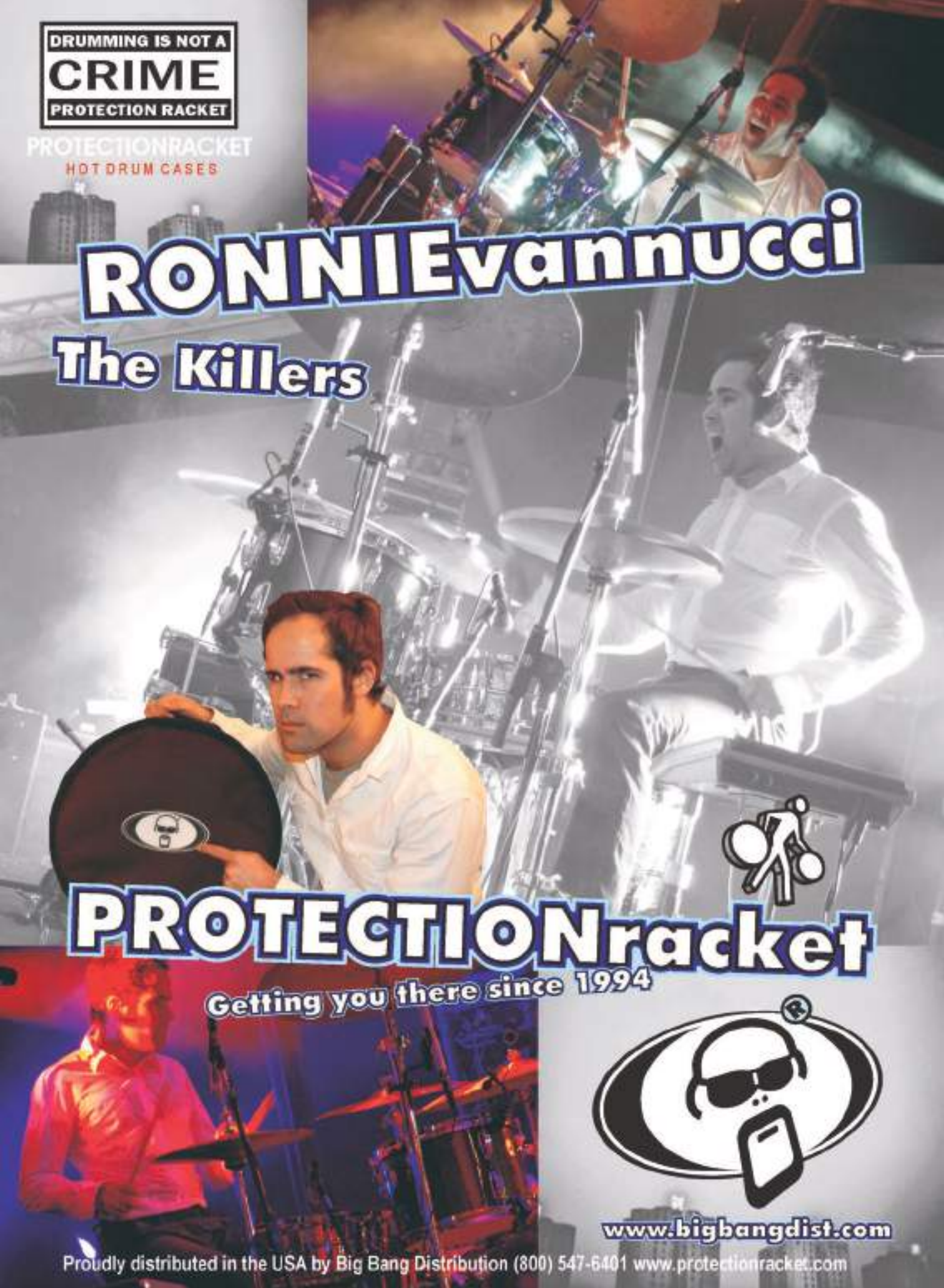
Totally Wack

John Wackerman's Best Recordings

Artist	Album
John Wackerman	John Wackerman's Drum Duets, Vol. 1
Kazumi Watanabe	Kilowatt
Bunny Brunel	Café Au Lait
Bunny Brunel	Momentum
Hot Potty	Hot Potty
Hot Potty	One Step Closer To Broadway
Mass Mental	How To Write Love Songs
Dennis Agajanian	Just As I Am

His Faves

Artist	Album	Drummer
Steely Dan	Aja	various
Weather Report	Heavy Weather	Alex Acuña
Frank Zappa	You Can't Do That On Stage Anymore, Vol. 3	Chad Wackerman
Vital Information	Come On In	Steve Smith
Jaco Pastorius	Twins, Vol. 1 & 2	Peter Erskine
Bad Religion	The Empire Strikes First	Brooks Wackerman
A Perfect Circle	Thirteenth Step	Josh Freese
No Doubt	Rock Steady	Adrian Young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setup was always changing, mostly the number of toms.

MD: What about your sticks? Did you play a consistent stick size throughout all these recordings?

John: I did change sticks. With Clayton I used Vater 5As for the jazz thing. And on other stuff, I used mainly Vater 5B or Studio 5B models. I feel it's very important to match the stick with the style of music you're playing.

MD: Growing up with successful musical siblings, what have you learned from each of them?

John: Well, Chad was a big influence early on. He's my older brother and he used to go to Stan Kenton camps and all that stuff. We all took lessons from the same teachers, which was a big influence too. And when Chad got into Zappa's band, he'd take me to some of the rehearsals and gigs.

My brother Bob, who plays bass, was a big influence as well because we played in a lot of bands together. We did Maynard's gig together and we've done sessions together.

And then Brooks—my younger brother—is totally into the whole punk thing. I wasn't really into that kind of stuff, but he opened me up to it.

MD: What's your goal with the release of *Drum Duets*?

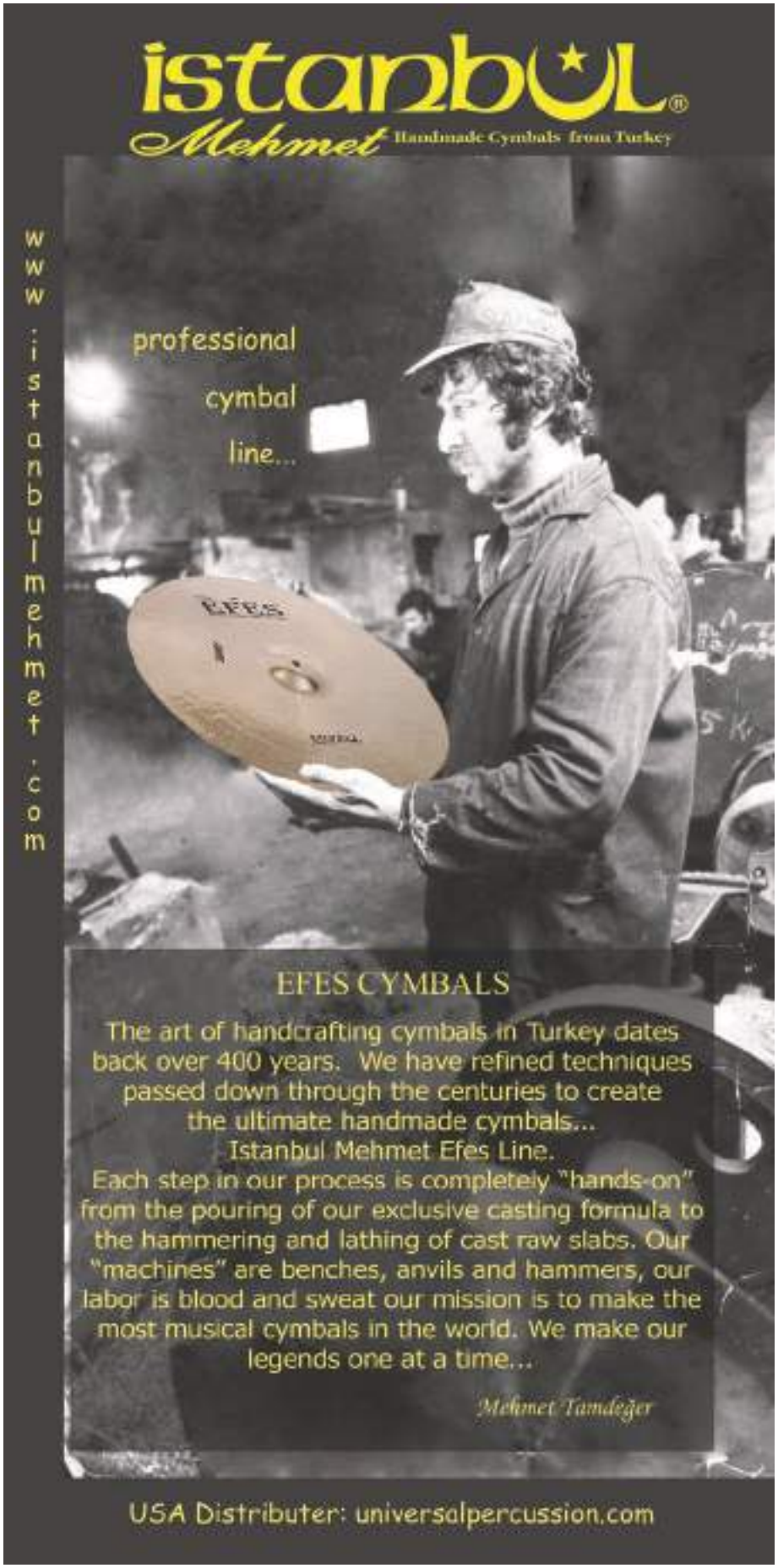
John: I just wanted to put something out that's good, interesting, and creative. That was my goal when I started. Hopefully it will inspire other drummers.

MD: Would you consider this to be the biggest challenge of your career?

John: Absolutely. It's also the most rewarding and creative thing I've done. Like I said, I grew up with drummers all around, and I love drumming. So, yeah, this project has been a total passion of mine.

For more information on John and Drum Duets, *please visit www.johnwackerman.com.*

To hear tracks from John's *Drum Duets, Vol.1,* go to www.moderndrummer.com.



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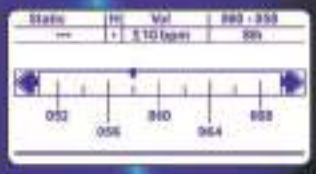

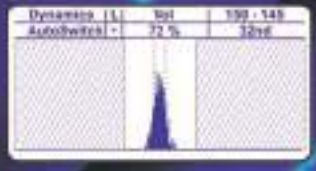

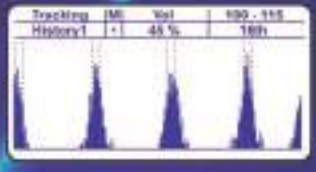

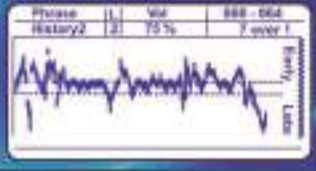

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Jamil Byrom

Guitar Center Drum Off Winner

by Rick Long

Jamil Byrom drummed his way into the winner's circle at Guitar Center's 2005 Drum Off Grand Finals held at the Wiltern LG Theatre in Los Angeles, California this past January 14.

Byrom, who gained the nickname "Carmel Ice" because of his smooth style on the drums, began playing at the Friendship West Baptist Church in his hometown of Dallas, Texas. His first professional gig was with the Youth Workshop Choir of Dallas under the direction of Gospel superstar Kirk Franklin. Instructor William Richardson also helped the drummer develop technique and coordination through an appreciation of different musical cultures and styles. Gospel, jazz, and R&B were Byrom's primary interests, but he studied all genres while earning a music performance degree from Alcorn State University in Mississippi.

Byrom entered the Guitar Center Drum Off competition as one of 3,000 competitors who signed up at their local store, hoping for a shot in the grand finals. Over a four-month period, a field of six contestants from across the country was chosen for the final competition. The twenty-seven-year-old Byrom played a spirited and energetic solo that showed off his skills in a variety of styles.

MD caught up with Byrom after the award was presented to get the scoop on this year's champion.

MD: How did you develop the winning solo?

JB: Actually, I just had a few ideas that I knew I was going to stick in there at some point in time. What's been working for me so far is just letting it flow. I have a sketch of the routine in mind, but not the whole thing worked out ahead of time.

MD: What led you to go down to Guitar Center and sign up for the drum off?

JB: I had been in the competition a couple of times when I was in high school and once again after college. This is the first year I made it past the store finals to the second level.

MD: Are there any drummers that you can point to and say, "When I saw that drummer play, I had to play the drums"?

JB: Dennis Chambers, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Steve Jordan.

MD: What is it about the drums that made you pick them over all the other instruments?

JB: Man, I think it's God and church. I've known I could play since I was a little kid. Then one night I was in choir rehearsal at church singing tenor when the director said, "Come try this." And he put me on the drums. I was thirteen years old.

MD: Are you a full-time musician?

JB: Yes, I play in a couple of different bands: a club band and a church band. I also teach private lessons.

MD: What has your life been like since you entered the competition?

JB: I've tried to make practice a daily thing. And this event has been a big motivation for me. Before college and the real world hit me, I was practicing all the time. My senior year in high school, I only needed two credits, so I signed up for band three times a day. I was practicing four or five hours before I even got home. So as far as working on the competition, I've just been trying to get back to that "all-the-time" mode.

Hometown: Dallas, Texas
Education: Bachelor of music from Alcorn State University in Mississippi
Drum Off Prize Package (Total Value–$40,000): a Gretsch custom kit with a Gibraltar rack system, a DW Collector Series five-piece maple kit, a Zildjian custom box set and cymbal bag, one-year endorsement deals with Evans and Sabian, and a 2006 Scion xB automobile
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(Unorthodox, North Country Distribution)

CD Of The Month!

Italian experimental jazz drummer **ALESSIO RICCIO**'s combination of drumming, electronic manipulation, and sound exploration reveals a haunting, probing world. On this trio recording he's joined by the searching tenor sax of **Ellery Eskelin** and **David Shea**'s wide-ranging samples. On *Drawing*, the trio creates a restless and inquisitive sound world centered on Riccio's concept. By combining abstract, free drumming with electronics, Riccio reveals a unique ear for color and texture. From the rumbling depths of his largest drums, to his percolating snare, to a seemingly endless variety of metallic sounds, Riccio's rhythmic textures surge and simmer. His adventurous and original conception marks him as an improviser to watch. **Martin Patmos**

Berger Knutsson Spering With Friends

See You In A Minute–Memories Of Don Cherry (Country & Eastern)

●●●½

Some members of this ensemble—including drummer **BENGT BERGER**—worked with trumpeter Cherry before his death in 1995. Now they reconnect with their old friend by playing his tunes, which are alternately playful and meditative. Though Cherry ran in jazz and free-jazz circles, a hypnotic thirty-minute medley featuring Eastern melodies and African rhythms makes a strong case for simply considering him a *world* musician. At times Berger creates a polyrhythmic tom-based pulse and lets the horn players float over and around it. Elsewhere he has fun with various bells and jingles. Whatever sounds he chooses, nothing can shake his feel-good foundation. (www.countryandeastern.se) **Michael Parillo**

Shadow Gallery Room V (Inside Out)

●●½

The common threads running through these songs raise the specter of the dreaded "concept record," but this jacket well suits prog-metal band Shadow Gallery. The group's ability to slide through sunny hooks, symphonic-metal trysts, and seemingly sincere rock balladry hints at Def Leppard, Kansas, Queensrÿche, and Evanescence. Drummer **JOE NEVOLO** must have used a calculator to develop the timing in some of these intricate, sci-fi-inspired compositions, as his precise "flying brick" rhythmic pulsations and herky, jerky bumps inject surprise into the flowing musical stream. Nonetheless, it's the record's high production value and the band's slow to mid-tempo, narrowly-skirting-schlocky serenades that really catch the listener's ears. **Will Romano**

ECM

Manu Katché
Neighbourhood

Jan Garbarek: saxophones
Tomasz Stanko: trumpet
Marcin Wasilewski: piano
Slawomir Kurkiewicz: double-bass
Manu Katché: drums, percussion

"Neighbourhood is a thoughtful, feel good jazz album that harks back to the traditions of modern jazz while remaining contemporary – thanks to Katché's inventive drumming." –*The Guardian*

In Stores Now

Paul Motian Band
Garden of Eden

Chris Cheek & Tony Malaby: saxophones
Steve Cardenas, Ben Monder & Jakob Bro: electric guitars
Jerome Harris: electric bass
Paul Motian: drums

"History has shaken (Paul Motian) out as one of the greatest drummers in all of jazz..."
–*The New York Times*

In Stores Now

Charles Lloyd
Zakir Hussain
Eric Harland
Sangam

Charles Lloyd: saxophones, taragato, flutes, piano, percussion
Zakir Hussain: tabla, voice, percussion
Eric Harland: drums, percussion, piano

"Lloyd plays searing alto saxophone lines and muses gently on the flute while intermingling with Hussain and Harland's spirited percussion discussions."
–*Denver Post*

In Stores April 4th

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Jay Terrien

All The Dolls In The Same Place (Drunker Quicker Music)

Bassist **Jay Terrien** joins King Crimson's **PAT MASTELOTTO** on *All The Dolls In The Same Place*. Using only five- and six-string basses and a variety of tunings, Terrien stretches the limits of his instrument and weaves a complex melodic tapestry. Mastelotto supports this with some extraordinary live and programmed parts. Tracks include the epic "Judging By The Size Of Carnie," which transitions seamlessly from 4/8 to 5/8 to 6/8 to 9/8. Throughout, Mastelotto contributes his progressive groove and chops, laying the foundation for Terrien's well-rounded and visionary solo effort. (www.jayterrien.com) **Jon Thibault**

Various Artists

Armageddon Over Wacken Live 2004 (Magick/Armageddon Music)

With a trio of discs jammed full of live-recorded, hard rockin' tracks from Europe's largest music festival, Wacken Open Air, *Armageddon Over Wacken* isn't an easy release to pound through in one sitting. But for an all-night head-banging experience, this'll likely do the trick. The track listing includes top-notch performances from established vets Anthrax, Mötörhead, Cannibal Corpse, and DIO. But dig a little deeper and you'll spot some greatness amongst the varied field, including numbers from Nevermore, Mystic Prophecy, Reckless Tide, and Gun Barrel. Granted, we could've used more than just two **MIKKEY DEE**-drummed tracks, but we're just glad to have any. **Waleed Rashidi**

Journey

Generations (Sanctuary)

Journey's distinctive pop rock sound was such a recognizable part of the soundtrack of the '80s that it'd be nearly impossible to rekindle the huge success that made them a household name back in the day. But that won't distract them from creating great new music for their loyal fans. *Generations* offers the best material that Journey has recorded since Steve Perry left the group. All bandmembers impressively share lead vocal chores, including drummer **DEEN CASTRONOVO**. Deen's a bundle of talent, has one of the heaviest grooves in rock, and flaunts it on each track. On "Out Of Harm's Way," "Gone Crazy," and "In Self-Defense," Castronovo fires it up. And the super funky "Better Together" shows his versatility. Arguably, the current Journey lineup is musically stronger and more free-spirited than any previous version. Long live *this* Journey. **Mike Haid**

Kalles World Tour

Start (www.kallesworldtour.dk)

After much scrutiny, I must weigh this catchy, innovative, and drum-heavy Euro pop–oriented music against the great Marco Minnemann's work with his Illegal Aliens project; the similarities are striking. That being said, drummer **KALLE MATHIESEN** is a strong, talented, and creative player. And the music is certainly more rhythmically and melodically interesting than most of today's pop. Minnemann has set high standards in this small, obscure market, and Kalle seems to be catching up to something that Marco has already explored, conquered, and moved on from. Comparisons aside, this is very inviting, forward-thinking music with exceptional drumming and lots of potential. **Mike Haid**

COOL MUSIC OUT NOW!

Jazz

Paul Bollenback
Brightness Of Being (Elefant Dreams)

Anthony Branker & Ascent
Spirit Songs (Son Of Sound)

Quincin Nachoff
Magic Numbers (Songlines)

Singer/Songwriter

Paul Manousos
For Better Or Worse (www.paulmanousos.com)

Megan Reilly
Let Your Ghost Go (Carrot Top)

Amy Rigby
Little Fugitive (Signature Sounds)

Alt

Moth Immune To Gravity (Hey Domingo!)

Eagles Of Death Metal
Death By Sexy (Downtown)

Jon Langford
Gold Brick (ROIR)

Eastern Conference Champions
The Southhampton Collection (Leftwing)

Out Rock

Liars
Drum's Not Dead (Mute)

The Seconds
Kratitude (5RC)

Extreme Beats by Jeff Perlah

As I Lay Dying, Watch Them Die, A Life Once Lost, Obituary

Death was alive and kickin' last year, and with it came some superb drumming.

On their third album, *Shadows Are Security*, San Diego metal-core unit As I Lay Dying juggles stylish Scandinavian-friendly melodies, meaty US grade-A thrash, and a touch of emo, and the results cook, especially when it comes to **JORDAN MANCINO**'s drumming. Combining brutal power with killer grooves, Mancino accentuates Dying's dynamic arrangements on "Losing And Sight" and "Confined." (Metal Blade)

Oakland's Watch Them Die emerged from the ashes of several acclaimed underground bands (including Grimple and Buzzov-en), and their experience certainly shows on this latest full-length. Throughout *Bastard Son*, drummer **IRA HARRIS**'s chops harness and slice through a maniacal yet catchy thrash/hardcore foundation. Highly recommended. (Century Media)

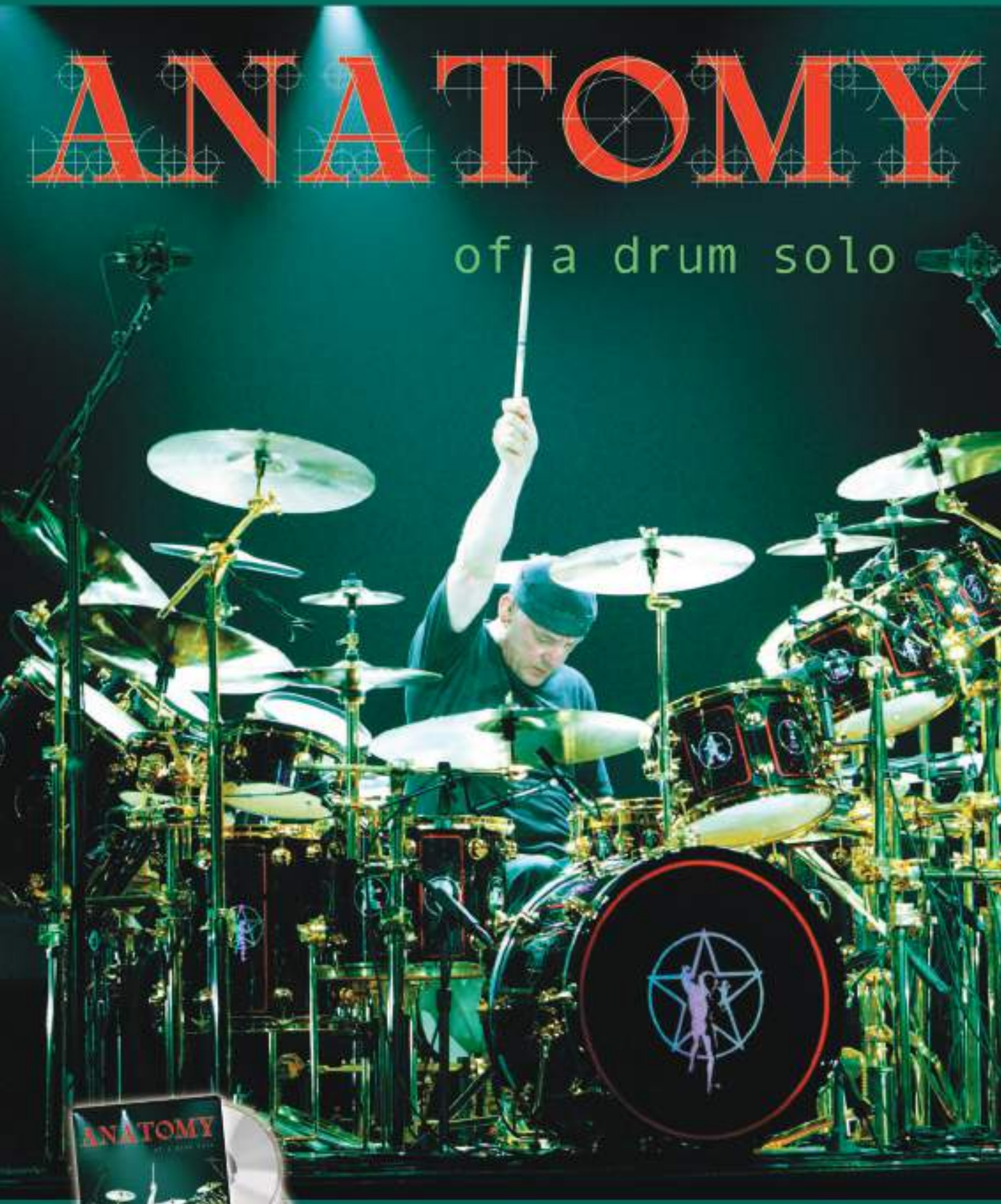
Then there's A Life Once Lost, whose crazed metal-core benefits from the whirl-wind drumming of **JUSTIN GRAVES**. On cuts like *Hunter*, Graves pounds the living daylights out of his kit, while providing killer accompaniment to the band's bottom heavy riffs and jazzy/proggy workouts. (Ferret)

Finally, there's Obituary—the only true death metal group of the bunch—who after eight long years make a stellar studio comeback with *Frozen In Time*. On tracks like "Back Inside" and "Mindset," drummer **DONALD TARDY** complements Allen West's unmistakable guitar crunch with vicious beats and a groove to die for. (Roadrunner)

THE HUDSON MUSIC DVD COLLECTION

ANATOMY

of a drum solo



Neil Peart's "Anatomy Of A Drum Solo", along with a wide selection of Hudson Music's DVDs and Books are now available at your local music retailer. For the name of a dealer near you log on to www.hudsonmusic.com. In Europe contact hudsoneuro@aol.com. Dealer inquiries: Hal Leonard Corp. (414) 774-3630.

HUDSON MUSIC

Bop Shoppin' by Robin Tolleson
Sherman Irby, Woody Witt, Ada Rovatti

Three talented saxophonists sport new releases, and each features an excellent drummer. Alto player Sherman Irby's band on *Faith* includes pianist **Larry Willis**, bassist **Gerald Cannon**, percussionist **KHALIL KWAME BELL**, and drummer **WILLIE JONES III**. Jones is a superb ensemble player with great ears, his ideas flow seamlessly, and he's comfortable in slow, mid-tempo, and fast swing. He also plays polyrhythms quite a bit, invoking the late Elvin Jones in witty exchanges with former Jones bassist Cannon. (Black Warrior)

Square Peg, Round Hole features Houston-based tenor man Woody Witt's quintet, which features drummer **ARI HOENIG**, trumpeter **Randy Brecker**, and pianist **David Kikoski.** This is a heavy-blowing, hard-swinging affair with Hoenig fully involved, leading and answering, listening and launching. (Apria)

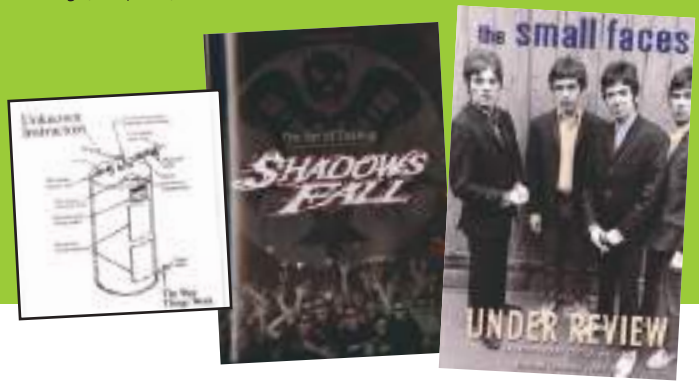
Though Ada Rovatti's *Airbop* sports some of the same personnel as Witt's disc (Kikoski, Brecker), it has a more modern flavor, and features drummer **BEN PEROWSKY** and percussionist **DON ALIAS.** Rovatti leads the band blistering out of the gate, then settles into a gritty funk vamp. She never goes "smooth," combining a low and silky tone with angular, provocative solo ideas. Perowsky throws a backward spin on "Shelter Island," plays a jagged Latin funk groove on "2-Bros," displays a light, free-but-not-quite-out feeling on "My Shining Hour," and offers a dynamic solo on "One Dollar And 20 Cents," bringing strong tones off the kit. (Apria)

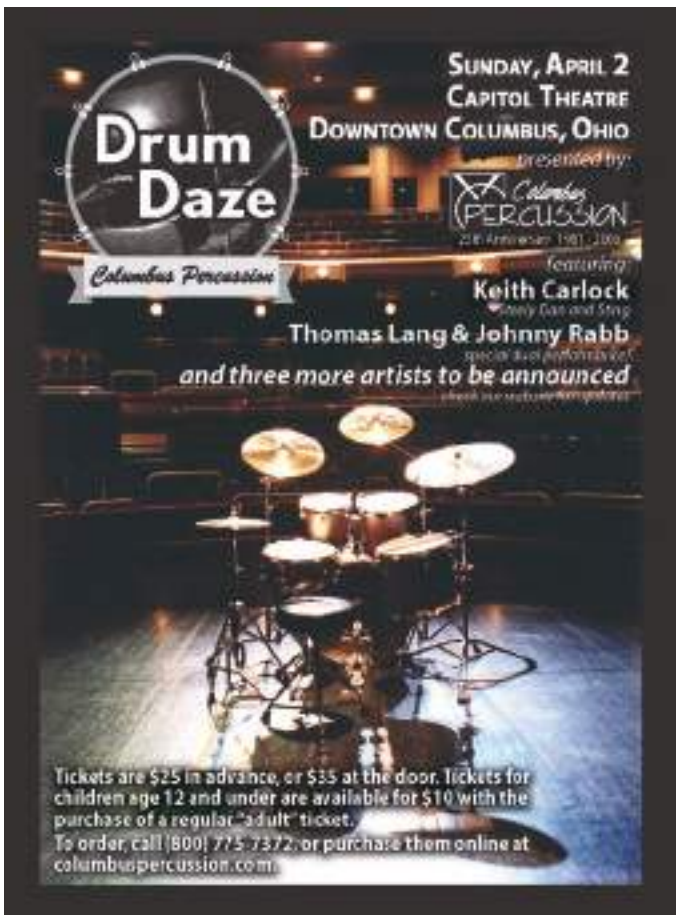
Of Further Interest

Unknown Instructors is an improv band that punks can get behind. Featuring Minutemen legends **Mike Watt** (bass) and **GEORGE HURLEY** (drums), as well as their peers **Joe Baiza** (guitar) and **Dan McGuire** (vocals), these Instructors give a lesson in listening, thinking, and rocking that you'll not soon forget. (Smog Veil)

Our man **JASON BITTNER** proves his MD Readers Poll worthiness on Shadows Fall's DVD *The Art Of Touring.* (Century Media)

The Small Faces Under Review: A Critical Analysis may suffer from a dull title, but don't let that stop you. This was one of the most visceral and important bands of '60s rock, and the wonderful live footage included here is rarely seen, at least on these shores. **Steve Marriott** was one of rock's all-time great singers and guitarists, and future Who drummer **KENNEY JONES** was a wonderfully supportive and soulful player, indispensable to this legendary group's sound. (Chrome Dreams)





Eddie Tuduri, Lynn Higa, Vinnie Colaiuta, Dion Cornejo, Airto Moriera

Martone (Guitar 9)

level: all, $25

Canadian prog metal/fusion guitar slinger **Dave Martone** pulls together a smoking quartet to perform his technically and emotionally charged instrumental compositions on this well-produced live set from the Central City Brewing Co. in Surry, British Columbia. Drummer **DANIEL ADAIR** (3 Doors Down, Nickelback) proves that he's got serious chops; this is complex material. Adair's solid, advanced double bass technique and authoritative groove give the music the power and precision that it demands. (www.guitar9.com/martonedvd.html) **Mike Haid**

Gongzilla Live In Concert And The East Village Studio (Escape TV)

level: all, $19.95

The atmospheric musings of the seasoned progressive fusion artists who form Gongzilla are captured in a uniquely edited production of live and in-studio performances. Drumming great **GARY HUSBAND** is highlighted throughout the drifting, somewhat psychedelic production. Most notably, Husband's featured drum solo displays commanding polyrhythmic independence between hands and feet in an aggressive, musical composition. Much of the in-studio footage captures the laborious aspects of musical creation in a controlled environment. In fact, the production may come off as more educational than entertaining, depending on the viewer's perspective. One thing is obvious: Gongzilla takes their music quite seriously. (www.escapetv.tv) **Mike Haid**

Travers & Appice Live (Escapi Music)

level: all, $16.98

When we speak of rock drumming legends, **CARMINE APPICE** tops the list for active veterans still answering the call of the hard rock legacy. In this live footage from The House Of Blues in Myrtle Beach, Appice, with guitar great **Pat Travers** and bass whiz **T.M. Stevens**, confirms that you're never too old to rock. Carmine's signature double bass fills are in full force as he powers through the eleven-song set that includes an emotional drum solo, along with the classic Beck/Bogart/Appice tune "Living Alone" and Travers' hit "Boom Boom." (www.escapimusic.com) **Mike Haid**

Grant Collins

Live At The Tivoli– The Official Bootleg (independent)

level: intermediate to advanced, $32.95

Anyone who can play "Three Camps" with their feet deserves attention. Another boy wonder from down under (what's in the water down there?), Australia's Grant Collins takes the Bozzio one-man-percussion orchestra to new heights by incorporating advanced Donati/Lang ambidextrous double pedal abilities and amazing four-limb independence. Amassing an arsenal of twenty-three drums, thirty-two cymbals, and eighteen foot pedals, Collins performs creative original solo compositions to an enthusiastic sold-out crowd that doesn't seem to mind sitting through the lengthy percussion pieces. Collins' drumming skills are world-class, and even though the recording quality and obstructed camera angles are less than perfect (it *is* a bootleg), experiencing the innovative concepts that the drummer has developed is worth the aggravation. It's hard to imagine a human acoustic drumkit performer advancing much beyond this level. (www.grantcollins.com) **Mike Haid**

To hear many of the artists reviewed in this month's *Critique*, be sure to tune in to MD Radio MODERNDRUMMER.com

New Metal

Meinl Mb10 Cymbals

Meinl's Mb10 series represents the first time that cymbals have been made from B10 bronze alloy. According to the manufacturer, the fundamental sonic characteristic of this alloy creates an extremely modern and sophisticated sound, with powerful projection, well-balanced frequencies, and warmth. The surface of each cymbal features extensive lathing and polishing for "a modern look with a noble attitude."

The Mb10 series is available as individual cymbals in all common sizes. Representative prices include $144 for an 8" splash, to $288 for a 16" medium crash, $445 for a 21" medium ride, and $560 for a pair of medium Soundwave hi-hats. Also available is a four-piece Cymbal Set ($1,158) and a four-piece Rock Cymbal Set ($1,222). All pre-packaged sets include a free Professional cymbal bag.

(615) 227-5090, www.meinlcymbals.com

Cool Sounds On The Field

Evans MX Frost Tenor Drumheads And MX2 White Bass Drumheads

MX Frost marching tenor heads from Evans feature a robust locking hoop for extreme durability under tension. They're said to provide a resonant tone that projects well in outdoor venues, while their translucent coating gives them a warm sound and a unique visual appeal. Heads are available in sizes from 6" ($23) to 16" ($34).

The MX2 White bass drum head is a 2-ply version of Evans' popular MX1 White bass head. It features an adjustable internal damping system consisting of eight felt arcs that can be configured in various combinations for extensive sound options. According to Evans, the two plies of 7.5-mil film make the head extremely durable while offering an emphasized attack and focused sustain that's especially valuable for indoor marching. Heads are available in sizes from 16" ($71) to 32" ($131).

(800) 323-2746, www.evansdrumheads.com.

From Deep In The Woods

Mapex M Birch Black Forest Finishes And "Buy A Kit, Get A Cat" Promotion

Mapex's M Birch drumkits are now available in Black Forest Cherry and Black Forest Green fade-to-black transparent lacquer finishes. Each color is applied by hand to an exterior maple veneer surrounding the all-birch shell. The finish requires eight individual coats and is buffed to a rich, high-gloss luster.

In addition to offering the two new M Birch finishes to the existing five transparent lacquer colors, Mapex has decided to extend their "6 For 5" promotion throughout 2006, and has added a "7 for 6" promotion. Every M Birch kit purchased in 2006 will come with a free add-on tom, plus mounting hardware. List prices for five-piece kits (plus the free tom) in the new Black Forest finishes start at $1,299. Burst-finished, six-piece Studio kits (which come with a free 8" tom to create a seven-piece kit) are priced at $1,699. Matching components are also available.

In another promotion, Mapex's "Buy A Kit, Get A Cat" program adds a free 7x12 cherry-and-maple Black Panther snare drum to the purchase of any all-maple Pro M drumset. The free drum carries a value of $499.99 and cannot be purchased separately. Five-piece Pro M drumsets start at a list price of $1,729. (This promotion is limited to 2006 Model Pro M kits only. It is not valid with Classic and Classic Plus configurations.)

(615) 793-2050, www.mapexdrums.com.

New Look, Inside And Out

Redesigned HQ RealFeel Practice Pads

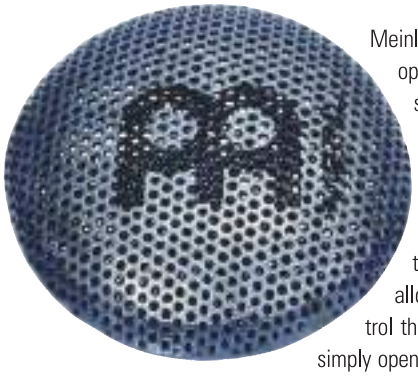
HQ Percussion has made quality upgrades and cosmetic changes to its RealFeel practice pads. The pads now sport a dark gray fabric-finish rubber that will help to hide scuff marks and maintain a "new" look longer.

In addition, HQ products now feature packaging that's designed to be more attractive while better identifying the contents, product features, and benefits. The packaging includes large, four-color labels and product descriptions in English, Spanish, and Japanese.

(800) 323-2746, www.hqpercussion.com.

Shake, Rattle, And Roll

Meinl Spark Shaker And Percussion Workstation



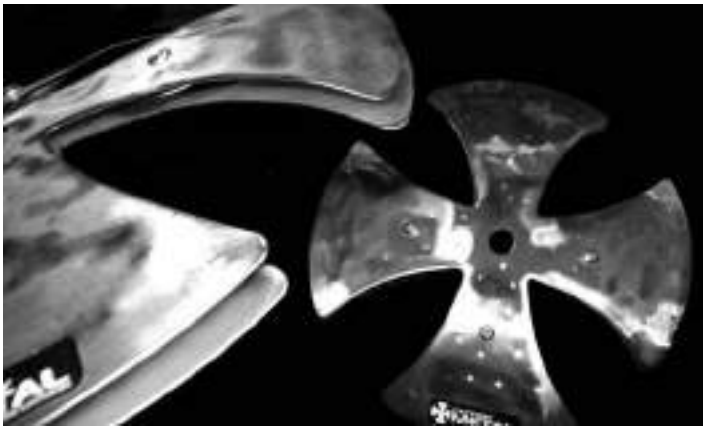
Meinl's Spark Shaker—developed with Spanish percussionist Juan Carlos Melian—is made from coated steel and filled with small steel pellets. It's sized to hide in the palm of the hand, allowing the player to control the amount of muffling by simply opening or closing that hand. The Spark Shaker is said to produce "a sparkling, chirping, splashing sound that adds a unique flavor to the music." Medium ($32) and large ($34) sizes are available.

Meinl also offers a newly designed Percussion Workstation, which can be expanded or reduced to fit the percussionist's individual needs—and the gig's available space. The Workstation is made from heavy-duty materials in order to hold up even when equipped to the fullest. It includes one 22"x24" and two 18"x12" padded fiberglass percussion tables, as well as attachable vertical bars and various mounting rods. The unit is primarily black, to blend in with any stage and lighting design. List price is $899.

(615) 227-5090, www.meinlpercussion.com.

Incoming!

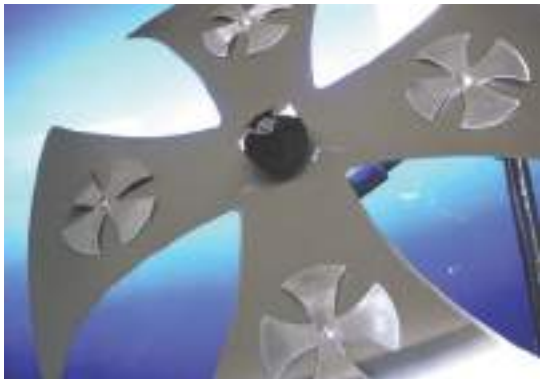
Factory Metal Percussion Cross Crasherz And FX Shrapnel



Cross Crasherz from Factory Metal Percussion are said to produce "a crisp, biting attack followed by a long, intense metallic rattle effect." They're fabricated from two alloy layers with four jingles sandwiched in between for an extra layer of sonic depth. Their decay and pitch can be adjusted by tightening the tension screws that hold the cross plates together. Four sizes are available: 6" ($59), 8" ($69), 10" ($79), and 12" ($89).

FX Shrapnel are devices that can be installed on FMP instruments to customize metallic pitch and effects, similar to the way rivets are often installed on cymbals. Shrapnel models include Jingle, Starz, and Cross designs, and come in packs of four for $28. FMP has upgraded all Cross Benderz, Gothic Radius, and Vertical Chinas to include "Bullet Holes" for mounting FX Shrapnel effects.

(760) 868-4808, www.factorymetalpercussion.com.



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The Reference Shelf

Drum Play-Along Songbook/CDs

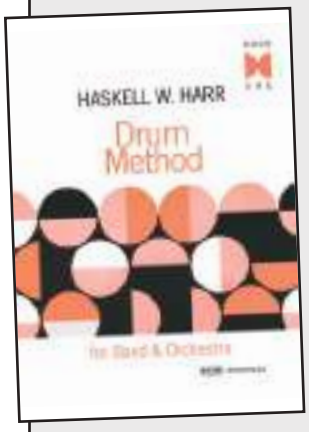
(Hal Leonard)

With this new book series, drummers can play their favorite songs in their favorite styles along with backing tracks on the accompanying CDs. The CDs can be played in any CD player, but are also enhanced so that Mac and PC users can adjust the recordings to any tempo without changing pitch.

Drummers can read the notation in the books and listen to the demonstration tracks in order to learn the parts. Then they can remove the drums from the recording and jam along. Hal Leonard focused on selecting songs with notable drum parts, and also included a legend for each song showing where the drums are notated on the staff.

Each Drum Play-Along volume offers eight favorites. *Pop/Rock, Vol. 1* includes "Peg," "Rosanna," and "Separate Ways"; *Classic Rock, Vol. 2* includes "Come Together," "Radar Love," and "Space Truckin'"; *Hard Rock, Vol. 3* includes "Panama," "Rock You Like A Hurricane," and "Smoke On The Water"; *Modern Rock, Vol. 4* includes "Chop Suey!," "Nookie," and "One Step Closer"; and *Funk, Vol. 5* includes "Cissy Strut," "Cold Sweat," and "Flashlight." List price for each volume is $12.95.

(800) 637-2852, www.musicdispatch.com.



The Haskell Harr Drum Method (New Edition)

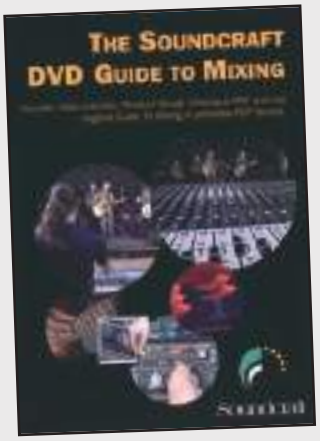
by Haskell W. Harr **(Hal Leonard)**

First published by the M.M. Cole Company in 1937, these books by PAS Hall of Famer Haskell Harr have taught thousands of students the basics of drumming.

In the more than fifty exercises in Book One, Harr excludes many rudiments, instead focusing only on those needed to play the average drum part, and emphasizes the study and mastery of the most common time figures. The book also covers percussion instruments, as well as the history, parts, and care of drums.

Book Two focuses on all of the rudiments, hand development, and short rhythmic patterns. Many studies, medleys, and songs are included to allow students to apply what they've learned. Both books are peppered with retro-cool, old-school photos. Book One (06620096) of the *Haskell W. Harr Drum Method* lists for $9.95, Book Two (06620097) for $12.95.

(800) 637-2852, www.musicdispatch.com.



The Soundcraft DVD Guide To Mixing

(Soundcraft)

This DVD provides a comprehensive walk-through of how to properly set up and operate an analog mixing console for live sound reinforcement use. It's offered by Soundcraft, a British manufacturer known for making the high-quality mixing consoles used on major tours across the globe. The DVD offers basic live-engineering advice in an interactive package that's broken down into chapters loaded with visual demonstrations.

In addition to the DVD presentation, the disc features Soundcraft's original *Guide To Mixing* booklet, a broad glossary of audio terms, and a full-range product catalog, each in Adobe PDF form. It's available wherever Soundcraft consoles are sold, at a list price of $17.99.

(818) 920-3212, www.soundcraft.com.

Drummer's First Aid Kit

by Robert Shi **(River Point Road)**

This book features 208 pages of tips, tricks, exercises, and remedies to suit the needs—and help solve the problems—of virtually any drummer. Sections include: A Drummer's Study Guide (strategies for musical development), A Drummer's First Aid Kit (tips and tricks for drummers of all ages), The Art Of Ostinato (independence-based reading text), The Rhythmic Companion (rhythmic-based reading text), PAS Rudiments (snare drum building blocks), and Song Form And Function (moving exercises into the real world). List price is $19.95 for the soft-cover book version, or $10 for an e-book PDF on CD.

(919) 302-2302, www.drummersfirstaidkit.com.

Click Disk 1 & 2

by Robert Shi **(River Point Road)**

This two-CD package is a practice tool containing forty-four click tracks consisting of cowbell, shaker, and tambourine sounds. It's designed to solve the problem of metronomes that sound terrible and/or cannot be heard over live drums. List price is $19.95.

(919) 302-2302, www.drummersfirstaidkit.com.

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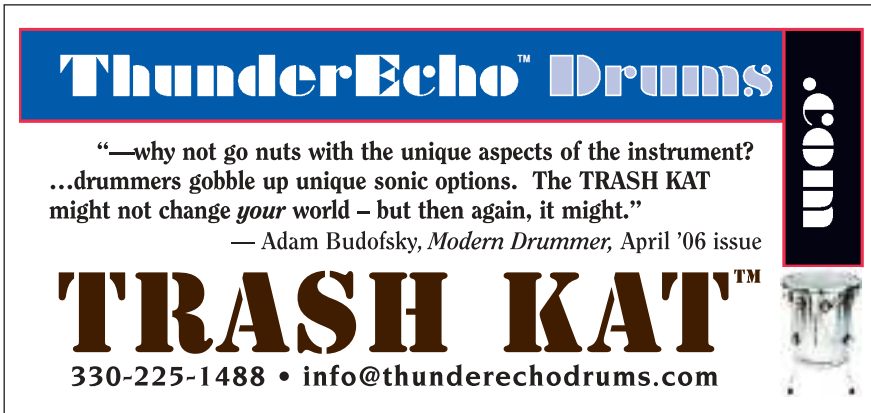
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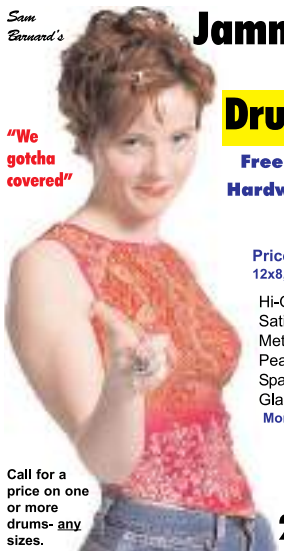

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Guitar Center 2005 Drum Off Grand Finals

The Guitar Center 2005 Drum Off Grand Finals were held this past January 14 at the Wiltern Theatre in Los Angeles, capping the seventeenth annual nationwide GC Drum Off competition. The contest began with in-store preliminaries, with the winners advancing to store finals, district finals, regional finals, and eventually the grand finals. There, six regional winners competed for the ultimate prize.

The finals event featured a concert performance by punk legends Bad Religion, a special collaborative drum exposition by **Travis Barker** (Blink-182 and The Transplants) and **Adrian Young** (No Doubt), and an opening set by Los Angeles–based punk band The Bronx.

Fourteen judges representing a wide variety of drumming styles were responsible for selecting the winner. They included **John Dolmayan** (System Of A Down), **Dean Butterworth** (Good Charlotte, Morrissey), **Stephen Perkins** (Jane's Addiction, Porno For Pyros), **Peter Erskine** (jazz legend), **Doane Perry** (Jethro Tull), **Billy Ward** (Joan Osborne), **Chris Hesse** (Hoobastank), **Steve Jocz** (Sum 41), **Kenny Livingston** (Sugarcult), **Alan White** (Yes), **John Tempesta** (Helmet, Rob Zombie), **Taylor Hawkins** (Foo Fighters), **Atom Willard** (The Offspring), and **Samantha Maloney** (Hole).

Drum Off winner Jamil Byrom in action

Theresa Long

When the finals had concluded, twenty-seven-year-old **Jamil Byrom** of Dallas, Texas had been named the winner. Byrom set himself apart from the other five contestants with an improvised set of traditional jazz chops, seamless rolls, and unique groove playing that connected with the crowd and the judges alike. His win earned him $40,000 in prizes. For more on Jamil, see the *On The Move* story on page 140.

Jack Sonni, Guitar Center vice president of marketing communication, stated, "Drum Off provides a platform for drummers around the country to achieve national recognition. Those drummers have the opportunity to share the stage with artists like Travis Barker and Adrian Young. This event gets our customers one step closer to living out their career dreams." Additional sponsors for this year's competition included Toyota Scion, Sabian, Remo, Drum Workshop, Gretsch, Evans, Zildjian, Tama, Pro-Mark, Kaman, and Gibraltar. *Modern Drummer* served as the official media partner for Drum Off.

Rick Long

Theresa Long

Theresa Long

Travis Barker (top) and Adrian Young offered special performances.

Yamaha Groove All Stars

A stellar assemblage of Yamaha drum artists joined a crack LA- and New York–based band for Yamaha's Groove All Stars event this past January 21. Although held in conjunction with the 2006 Winter NAMM trade show, this year's expanded event was also open to the public. Held for the first time at the beautiful Cerritos Center For The Performing Arts in Cerritos, California, the show offered an electrifying evening of groove-based performances.

The show was hosted by emcee/performer **Rick Marotta**. The lineup also included **Josh Dion, Bobby Blotzer, Ian Wallace, Oscar Seaton, Tom Brechtlein, Ndugu Chancler, Gerry Brown, Keith Carlock, Michael Bland, Marvin McQuitty, Peter Erskine, Chris Parker, Tommy Aldridge, Jerry Marotta, Matt Cameron, Zach Alford, Russ Miller, Andy Newmark** (who came from England just for the event), **Dave Weckl, John "JR" Robinson**, and **Steve Gadd.**

The July '06 *MD* will carry an educational article featuring photos and backstage discussions with many of the Groove All Stars.

Rick Marotta performed and acted as emcee for Yamaha's Groove All Stars show.

The show featured many of Yamaha's top drum artists, along with a crack band.

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Sabian's Drums Along NAMM

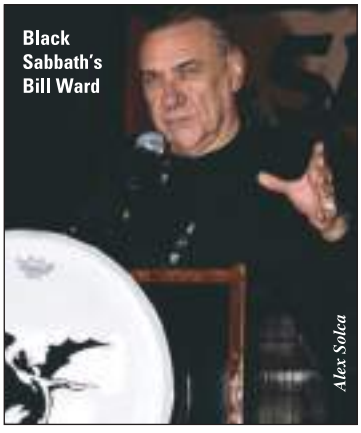
Sabian's Drums Along NAMM concert event was held at the Hilton Hotel on Friday, January 20. The show began with the presentation of Lifetime Achievement awards to Latin/jazz pioneer **Walfredo Reyes Sr.**, Los Angeles Philharmonic percussionist **Mitchell Peters**, and rock drumming great **Bill Ward** of Black Sabbath.

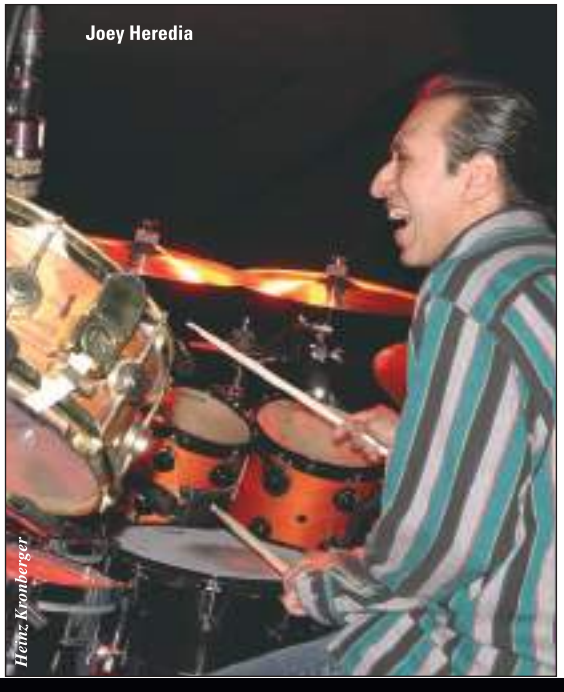
The awards were followed by a blistering demonstration of instrumental jazz/fusion virtuosity by The **Dave Weckl** Band. Dave anchored the performance with his trademark fluidity, precision, and dynamic style. Next came **Terry Bozzio**, playing with The Out Trio. The compositions ranged from delicate and ethereal to complex and powerful, as Terry explored the melodic potential of his "small jazz kit."

The evening concluded with incendiary Latin-based rock, courtesy of **Joey Heredia** & Friends. The high-energy performance featured Marco Mendoza on bass, Renato Neto on keyboards, and guest percussionists **Raul Rekow**, **Karl Perazzo**, and **Sandy Perez**, with a cameo appearance by **Sheila E.**

Additional support for the event was provided by Drum Workshop, Yamaha, Gibraltar, Latin Percussion, Gon Bops, and Remo.

Celebrating the achievements of Walfredo Reyes Sr. are (from left) Latin great Bobby Sanabria, Sabian founder Robert Zildjian, Reyes, and Sabian's Andy and Bill Zildjian.





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2006 Winter NAMM Events

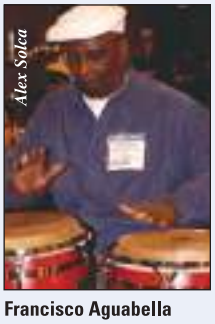
The annual National Association of Music Merchants winter trade show is held in Anaheim, California each January. The focus is on new musical products, but there's always a lot of newsworthy activity as well. Here's a look at the goings-on.

Velvet Revolver drummer **Matt Sorum** was on hand at the **Zildjian** booth to draw the three winners in Zildjian's recent contest. They'll visit the Zildjian factory to meet Matt and pick out their own set of cymbals.

Gretsch celebrated the 150th birthday of founder Friederich Gretsch with a cake-cutting ceremony on Friday, January 20. Kaman president **Bob Saunders** (left) joined **Dinah** and **Fred Gretsch** for the event. (The Gretsch company is owned by Kaman.)

On Saturday, January 21, **Pearl Percussion** honored conga greats **Ray Barretto** and **Francisco Aguabella**. Barretto was ill and could not attend, but many notable percussionists spoke in tribute to him.

Aguabella was presented with a set of Pearl's new Folkloric conga drums by Pearl artist **Marc Quiñones** and Pearl Percussion product manager Glen Caruba. A lively jam followed, involving Aguabella and master congueros **Richie Flores** and **Jesus Diaz**.



Francisco Aguabella

Richie Flores (left) and Jesus Diaz

Sunday, January 22 saw a fiery Latin percussion performance anchored by **Daniel de los Reyes**. Presented by DigiDesign and M-Audio, the act also included **Walfredo Reyes Jr.** on drumset, and **Bashiri Johnson**, **Luisito Quintero**, and **Christian Lageueux** on percussion.

The finals of the 2006 Winter NAMM **World's Fastest Drummer** competition were held on Sunday, January 22. In a special exhibition performance, sixteen-year old **Matt Smith** of Flint, Michigan set a "sixteen and younger" record with 1,061 single strokes in sixty seconds. Pearl Percussion product manager **Glen Caruba** established a new bare-hand category record by playing 1,140 conga-style single strokes in sixty seconds.

The Battle Of The Hands winner was **Rees Bridges** from London, England, with a score of 1,007 singles. The Battle Of The Feet winner was **Tim "The Missile" Yeung**, with a score of 872 singles. Prizes were provided by Pearl, Pro-Mark, Meinl, Axis, Remo, and Timbyrwood & Laser. For more information visit www.worldsfastestdrummer.com.

WFD Battle Of The Hands winner Rees Bridges, with Miss WFD Sara Furman

Battle Of The Feet winner Tim "The Missile" Yueng

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Tama Bubinga Party

Tama officially launched their new Starclassic Bubinga drumset series with a demonstration/party held this past January 23 at their West Coast headquarters in Sun Valley, California. The event opened with greetings from Tama general manager Ken Hoshino. Then artist relations director Gene Provencio introduced the day's performing artists: Spanky, Kenny Aronoff, and Simon Phillips.

Spanky is known for his work with Floetry, as well as on the recent Backstreet Boys tour. He opened with a high-energy pop/funk groove, then developed more and more complex patterns to reach an explosive climax.

Kenny Aronoff played to heavy rock tracks that displayed his trademark backbeat power. He demonstrated his versatility by closing with "Straight, No Chaser" by the Buddy Rich band.

Simon Phillips opened with a simple snare-drum roll, then gradually added the various components of his extensive kit. The result was a rhythmic composition that amply demonstrated the musical qualities of the bubinga drums.

Spanky

Kenny Aronoff

Simon Phillips

Who's Playing What

Legendary drummer/percussionist **Alex Acuña** is now using Gon Bops percussion and DW percussion hardware exclusively.

New Gretsch drumset artists include **Paul Thomson** (Franz Ferdinand) and **Jeremy Gagon** (The Heavenly States).

Gibraltar Hardware's artist lineup now includes **Dena Tauriello** (Antigone Rising), **Kevin Talley** (Chimaira), **David Dunkley** (Tim McGraw), **Vik Foxx** (The Veronicas), **Felix Pollard** (Clay Aiken), **Derek Kerswill** (Seemless), **Gilbert Ross** (Sammy Hagar), **Caesar Griffin** (Joss Stone), and **Rick Brothers** (Gretchen Wilson).

Now endorsing Gretsch drums *and* Gibraltar hardware are **Chris Cester** (Jet), **Chris McHugh** (Keith Urban), **Slim Jim Phantom** (Stray Cats), **Oscar Musiate** (Juan Gabriel), **Sebastien Grainger** (Death From Above 1979), **JJ Freire** (Bacilos), and **Nick Hodgson** (Kaiser Chiefs).

Poogie Bell (Marcus Miller), **Bob Meyer** (John Abercrombie), **Brendan Canty** (Fugazi), **Freddie Berman** (Amos Lee), **Oscar Musiate** (Juan Gabriel), **Will Noon** (Straylight Run), **John Andrews** (Tegan & Sara), **Ryan Moran** (Slightly Stoopid), **Jordan Johns** (Sound Team), and **Ben Greeno** (The Redwalls) have all joined the Istanbul Agop/Alchemy Cymbals artist roster.

New Factory Metal Percussion endorsers include **Doane Perry** (Jethro Tull), **Joey Heredia**, **Keith Carlock**, **Raymond Herrera** (Fear Factory), **Joel Rosenblatt**, **Billy Ashbaugh**, **Todd Sucherman** (Styx), **Crossmen Drum & Bugle Corps**, **Matt Wilson**, **Eric Singer** (KISS), **Billy Kilson**, **Vinny Appice**, **Tris Imboden** (Chicago), and **J.D. Blair**.

In Memoriam

Ray Barretto

Legendary conguero and bandleader Ray Barretto—a leading force in Latin jazz for four decades—died this past February 17, at the age of seventy-six. He had undergone surgery for a heart attack in January, but was unable to recover.

Barretto's musical heritage was as rooted in late-1940s Harlem bebop jam sessions as it was in his Puerto Rican ancestry. Accordingly, he was instrumental in integrating Afro-Caribbean rhythms with the improvisational elements of jazz. Few artists have been as successful over the years at fusing these two genres.

Barretto's playing is featured on the recordings of saxophonists Gene Ammons, Lou Donaldson, and Sonny Stitt, as well as guitarists Wes Montgomery and Kenny Burrell. But he achieved international superstardom as a pioneer of the salsa movement. Barretto released nearly two dozen albums on the Fania label from the late '60s until salsa's popularity peaked in the mid-1980s.

Indy Quickies

Woodstick 2006 will be held on Saturday, May 13 at Quest Field Event Center in Seattle, Washington. The event combines artist performances with an attempt to break the Guinness World Record for the number of drumset performers playing simultaneously. It also raises money to support school music programs. *MD* is the official magazine sponsor of Woodstick. Information is available at www.bennettdrums.com.

Paiste has posted digital sound files of its cymbals on its Web site, www.paiste.com. More than 300 cymbals were recorded, with each model represented with up to four different sound samples.

Contest Disclosures

1. Send your paragraph with your name, address, and telephone number to:
   MD/KoSA Eleven Scholarship Contest
   12 Old Bridge Road
   Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.
2. A distinguished panel of judges will evaluate each written entry and determine the winners.
3. ODDS OF WINNING EACH PRIZE DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ENTRIES RECEIVED AND THE QUALITY OF THE WRITING.
4. CONTEST BEGINS 4/1/06 AND ENDS 5/31/06. LETTERS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY 5/31/06 AND RECEIVED BY 6/3/06.
5. Prize Drawing: Five (5) winners will be selected on or before June 21, 2006. Winners will be notified by phone on or about June 21, 2006.
6. Employees and their immediate families of Modern Drummer, KoSA, Evans, Factory Metal, Drum Workshop, Mapex and TAMA, and their affiliates are ineligible.
7. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, misdirected, and/or delayed entries.
8. Open to residents of the US and Canada, 18 years of age or older. Void in FL and Quebec, Canada and where prohibited by law.
9. Prize - Five (5) scholarships to KoSA 11th Annual International Percussion Workshop. Prize includes tuition and room (double occupancy) and meals for the one-week workshop. *Transportation to and from Johnson, Vermont is the winner's responsibility.* Approximate retail value of all five scholarships: $5,000USD
10. The judges decisions are final. No prize substitutions will be permitted.
11. Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009 (973) 239-4140.
12. This contest subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or the winners' names, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

    Modern Drummer Publications / KoSA Eleven Scholarship Contest/Official Rules / Winners List, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.

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One For The Show

Scott Stahley of Tampa, Florida uses this elaborate setup to cover all drum and percussion parts in the musical *David*. Scott has an extensive background in playing drumset, congas, bongos, djembe, and all sorts of hand percussion. He had also spent many years playing an Octapad with his left hand to cover percussion parts in show bands. So he was up for the challenge of putting all his skills together for the show.

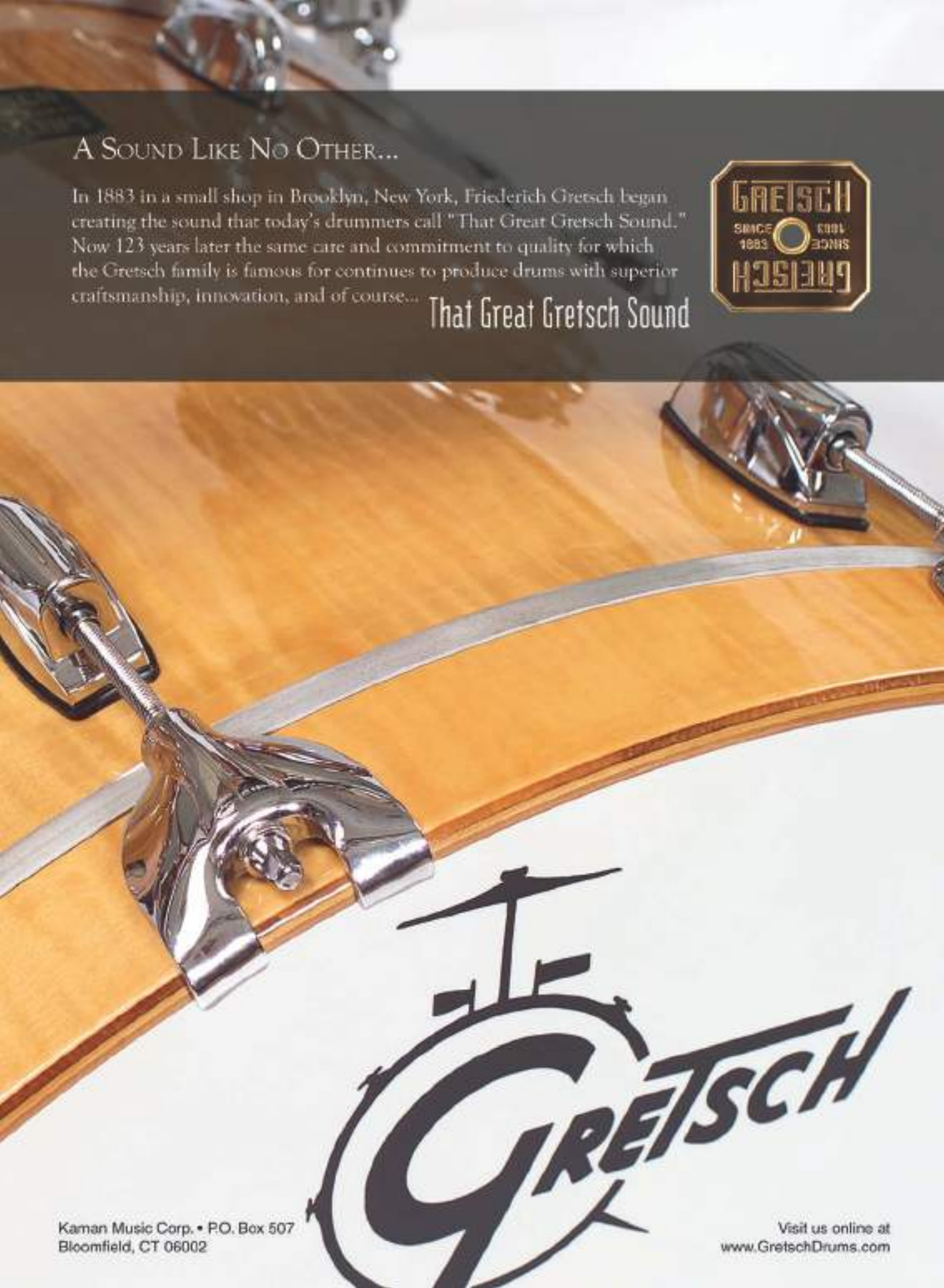
"I spent about a month in my drum room assembling the kit," says Scott. "I discovered pretty quickly that the music dictated the actual configuration of drum and percussion instruments. The kit is built on a huge Gibraltar rack system, using practically every multi-clamp made. It consists of a five-piece Ayotte drumset, LP congas, an LP djembe, a Remo djembe played with a bass drum pedal, a Roland SPDS sampler (for timpani, bell, and 808 kit sounds), Zildjian ride, crash, and splash cymbals, Wuhan China and splash cymbals, Paiste Accent cymbals, an udu (clay pot drum), a bodhran (Irish frame drum), a foot-played tambourine on a Gajate bracket, a foot-played woodblock on another Gajate bracket, and various shakers, woodblocks, chimes, bell trees, and rattles.

"I use a variety of hardware items, including a Pork Pie throne, a Tama double pedal, and three additional bass drum pedals for percussion. I play the kit with Pro-Mark Hot Rods, Broomsticks, and brushes."

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides or high-resolution (300 dpi) digital photos are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit.

Send photo(s) to: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.



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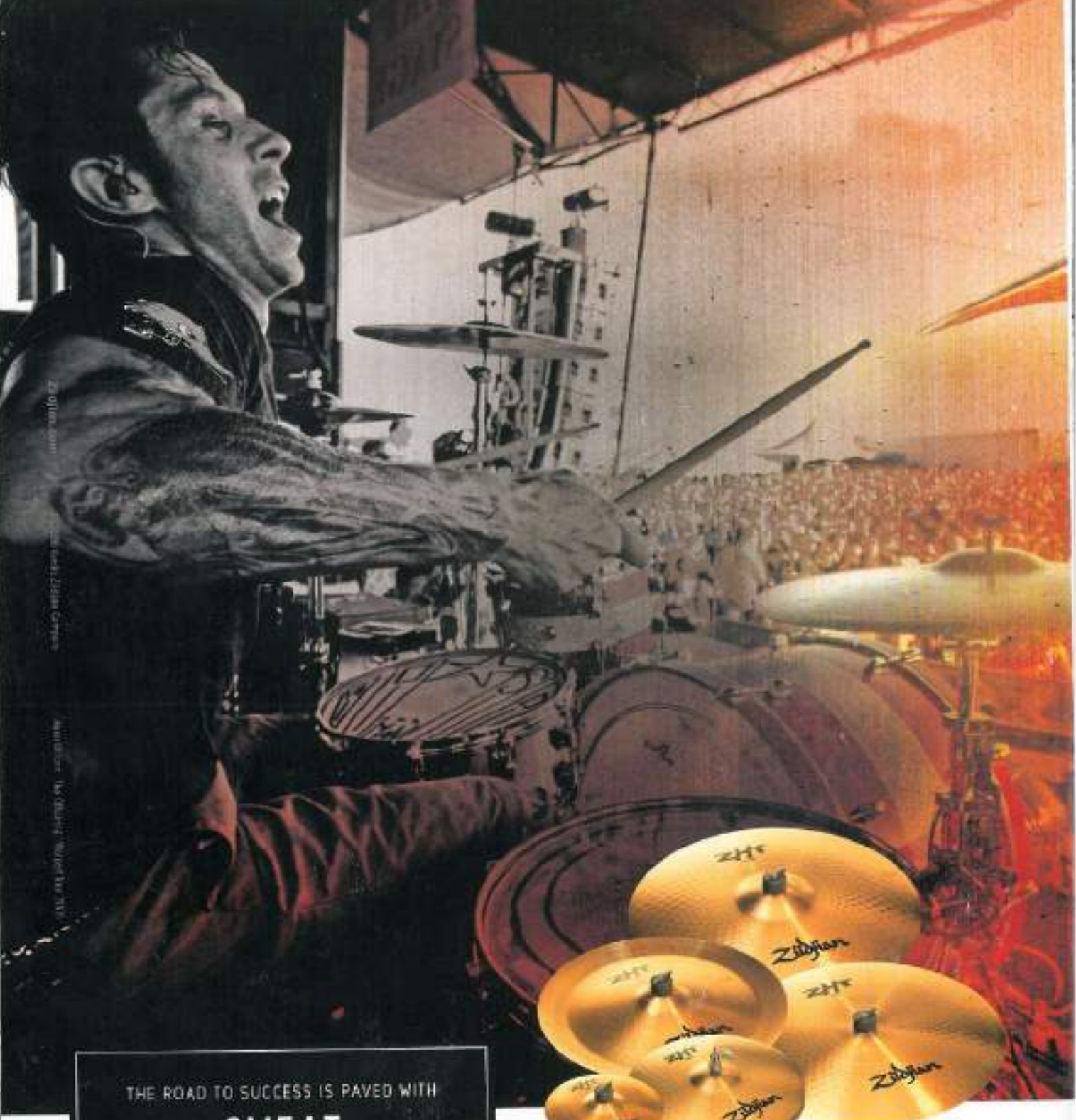

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